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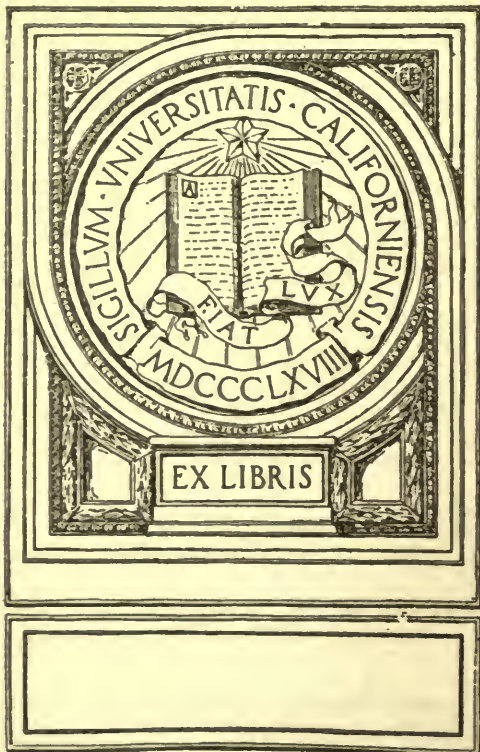
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THE
S T O R Y
OF A
ROYAL FAVOURITE.

BY
MRS. GORE.

“ No scandal about Queen Elizabeth I hope.”
CRITIC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MDCCCXLV.

AMBROSE & CO. LTD.
MANUFACTURERS OF
PAPER AND BOOKS

LONDON:

PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

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THE STORY

OF A

ROYAL FAVOURITE.

CHAPTER I.

WE cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashions. We are the makers of manners; and the liberty that follows our plans stops the mouths of all find-faults.—
SHAKSPEARE.

*Ingentem foribus domus alta superbis
Manè salutantum totis vomit ædibus undam.*

VIRGIL.

Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran—chaff and bran!

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

IF I were an ugly woman instead of a pretty dog, I certainly would not live in England.—
No country in Europe where personal attraction in the fair sex is rated so exorbitantly!—

VOL. II.

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In England, an ugly woman is a female Cain. Conscious that the mark of reprobation is upon her, she gives herself up in despair; for to attempt to improve her appearance by dress, would be esteemed a flying in the face of Providence.—All she has to do is to skulk through life, with her veil down; getting through her threescore years and ten as quietly as she can; neither seen, nor heard, nor thought of!

But in countries where marriage is a thing of *convenience*,—where estate is united to estate in the holy bonds of matrimony, or a sum in the five per cents, to railway shares in proportion,—and still more, where the dukedom of San This, is predestined through a long minority to espouse the principality of San That when it quits its convent, to whatever species of face or figure these worldly advantages may be attached, people are so accustomed to see the most frightful women occupying the highest positions in society, that ugliness becomes no longer offensive or ridiculous.

Unshamed by public disregard, it learns to cultivate other attractions than those of mere features and complexion.—It learns to dress well, to talk well,—to be amiable and pleasant, instead of morose and shy ;—and the consequence is, that some of the plainest women of exotic aristocracies are the most agreeable and most popular.

In Great Britain, though its copy-books have from time immemorial attested that Virtue is true beauty, the most virtuous ugliness has to look about it for a partner at a ball ; and knows *better* than to look about it for a partner for life ;—whereas in France, more than one of the tenderest passions on record, has been inspired by a perfect fright.—Three men of wit and fashion about town died and were buried and eaten by the worms, for love of Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse, who was pitted with the small-pox !

All this, gentle reader, purports to convince you that neither the Duke of Hesse Rudenberg, nor Count Rodolph von Trichstenstein, nor the Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Krautland

was making game of my poor dear duchess, when, a few hours after the visitors' Gallery at Wigmore Castle began to smell like a *tabagie*, of couriers and tobacco smoke, they agreed among their dingy selves that *Madame la Duchesse* was “*charmante* !”

Of course the epithet of “*charmante*” implied that she was “*très grande dame* ;”—that she had welcomed them to her house with the most high-bred courtesy, and was ready to enter into conversation with conciliatory ease on topics of general interest.—The tact acquired by a life spent in the great world rendered her perfectly *simpatica* with the new comers ; whereas Lady Rosamel,—gentle, reserved, and incapable of entering at once into an intimacy with strangers, was pronounced to be a pretty woman,—but a log,—“*décidément bûche* !”

Yet what an angel she was, that dear Lady Rosamel !—Though she bestowed no more notice on *me* than though I were a dog embroidered in floss-silk on the cushion whereon I was lying, for minutes and hours together have I fixed my attention upon *her* !—There

was such suavity in all her looks and words and movements,—such unaffected gentleness both in her nature and gestures—that it afforded rest to one's soul to contemplate her, after the painful angularities of this wicked world.—Lady Rosamel was a *punctum staus* amid the chaotic disorder of the castle.

The sweetness of poor Mrs. Vernon was sullied by remorse. Her nature was a garden which, though abounding in flowers, required cultivation.—But Lady Rosamel had not a reproach upon her mind to discompose its gentle charities; and with her lovely children hanging about her,—living *in* them and *for* them, and without another thought in the world,—she looked like a Pietà of Carrara marble, deified by the prayers and incense of an Italian Dome. And how was such a woman to be otherwise than a *gêne* to the Duchess of Wigmore, and a *bûche* to the pleasure-seekers of *les eaux*?

Not that these foreign guests were to be classed in the same category.—The Duke of Hesse-Rudenberg was a *savant*, come over,

hammer in hand, to visit the Giant's Causeway and Caves of Staffa; and attend the British Scientific Association,

Where folks who winds and waters measure
And chattering *savans* take their pleasure;
And meet each year, from hall and college,
To stun the world with scraps of knowledge.

The young Prince of Saxe-Krautland was a *Jungling* of royal or rather *Hochfürstliche* extraction, travelling with his governor, — governor in the continental sense of the word; — every stray glance of whose sentimental blue eyes was kept in the strict subordination becoming a future prince of the empire. — While Trichstenstein was a Vienna dandy, — who comprehended Paris in the Jockey Club, the Rocher de Cancale, and the *Loge des Lions* at the grand opera; — and wrote down in his manual of geography — “Great Britain: — CAPITAL, Newmarket. — *Chief towns*: — Epsom, Ascot, and Doncaster. — *Scientific Institutions*: — Tattersall's, Aldridge's and the Stud House at Hampton Court.” *He* came to England

for the St. Leger, and October meetings ; and evidently considered that the most interesting natives of the British Islands went upon all fours.

To meet this German confederation, the duke had invited not only two of my quondam proprietors, Lord Algernon and Roper, — but a Sir Henry and Lady Bingley,—ornamental people, much in the habit of being invited to country houses, because dressy and chatty, and ready to flirt and play billiards or talk turnips with the country gentlemen, as their services might be required ;—besides the Earl of Horsham and his brother, the Hon. Charles Marston, two venerable twaddlers, residing in the neighbourhood, and as naturally appurtenant to Wigmore Castle as its two lodges. Of Lady Jane and Lady Rosamel I say nothing, as integral parts of the family.

At a house like Wigmore, it is an understood thing that the business of life in September, is partridge-shooting ;—in October, pheasant-shooting ;—and in November, battues

and fox-hunting, in laborious alternation.—Without putting in question, therefore, whether the hereditary prince and his governor would like to take their day's sport in one of the most celebrated libraries in the kingdom, or surmising that the Duke of Hesse-Rudenberg could prefer bringing down a few fragments of the range of rocks on the estate, to fifty brace of pheasants, the keepers were drawn out in battle array, Nockes and Mantons put in request, and half a dozen couple of other reluctant beasts led whimpering and crouching to the slaughter, which they were trained to consider sport;—simply because his grace delighted in having it inserted in the head keeper's book, and copied thence into the county paper and the Morning Post, that on such a day "The Duke of Wigmore and his illustrious guests, in all six guns, bagged in the course of three hours four hundred and seventy-four head of game, including two hundred and two brace of pheasants and a jack-snipe."

It struck me as odd, considering the zeal of

his grace for the first day's sport, enjoyed at the cost of human labour such as might have mended five miles of bad road, there was no talk of attacking the preserves a second time. —But from certain jokes exchanged between Roper and Lord Algy, I found that the scientific Duke of Hesse Rudenberg, a very absent man and accustomed to shoot only boar and *chevreuil*, had bagged a boy belonging to the keepers, who was lying dangerously wounded at the lodge; while the poor hereditary prince was forced to have his shoulder poulticed every night in his own room by the house-keeper, from the kicking of his gun, overloaded, because the obsequious governor had not chosen to intrust the operation to the keepers.

Trichstenstein was the only one of the party *really* delighted with his sport;—as intitling him, on his return to the Wollzeil, to brag of having shot four hundred brace of pheasants in four hours, with his own barrel.

But if the geological *Durchlauhet* felt somewhat puzzled by the diversions of Wigmore Castle, poor Madame von Trichstenstein was

really to be pitied. Having seen her host at Wisbaden in any other character than that of a family man, and formed her notions of *la vie de château* from the gay country parties in the environs of Vienna,—enlivened with balls, concerts, private theatricals, and above all, the absence of form and a defiance of *grande toilette*,—she was overpowered by the dulness of a life where nothing was done to entertain the guests till the afternoon;—and where satins and jewels played the chief part in the evening's pleasures.

Such of the ladies as *did* meet before luncheon, sat stitching over their embroidery-frames, silent and stupid, because each was afraid, in talking French to her, of being laughed at by the others. Lady Rosamel was engaged with her children; Lady Jane, reserved and unhappy; Lady Bingley, always occupied throughout the morning in planning what she should wear at night, watching in ambush the proceedings of the party, only with the view of making a good story out of them for the amusement of the next she hap-

pened to join: Sorry compensations these, for the loss of the gallantry, sociability, and aptitude to gather pleasure from every bush, which the pretty countess had been in the habit of finding in the summer-life of her own more cordial land!—

She was indignant too, to perceive that the old duke, so gallant at Wisbaden, cared more at home for his kennels and stables, than for her; and as to Roper and Lord Algy, the latter having satisfied his curiosity touching the victimization of his friend Sir Seymour, considered it much more his duty to comfort poor Lady Jane Barnsford, than to do the honours to a Bohemian countess of a house with which he had no manner of connexion; while Roper was too much taken up with his own consequence as derived from the *other* house, to think her anything but a bore.

“*Ce pauvre député*,” (as she always called him to the duke,) delighted not in man or woman either, who had not English enough to appreciate the triumphs of his maiden speech.

Satisfied, however, that, let Wigmore Castle

be as dull as it might, it would be better to enjoy the excellent *cuisine* of Béchameil, washed down by Hock such as they had never tasted on the Rhine, till the Houghton and the other Scientific meeting, in preference to running the risk of short-commons and long bills on the road, the Trichstenteins and Saxon royalties persisted in finding the duchess *une femme très distinguée*, and the duke *parfaitement grand seigneur*; more especially when, at seven o'clock, sounded the *salut* or dressing-bell.

“All this is not what it used to be!” observed Fido to me one evening, when, in spite of the frowns of his governor, the Hereditary Prince of Saxe Krautland had been guilty of three great yawns,—(for he seemed to think that, like *les trois saluts d'usage*, he must yawn to the right, left, and centre, lest any one of the party should be neglected in the demonstrations of his *ennui*.) “A few years ago, this was one of the pleasantest houses in England! But the dear duchess ages; and Lady Rosamel is a sad, rational, tiresome woman! I am

often puzzled how to get through my day among them !”

I could have found it in my heart to tell him that he was considered as great a bore as he considered other people. Why, *I* had no difficulty in getting through my day ! On the contrary, it was got through *for* me, by the unceasing attentions of the duchess and her fair guests. The more evident the paucity of amusement, the warmer the caresses bestowed upon me. I had as much my own way in the house, as dog could have.

One source of entertainment, however, awaited me, in which my governor could not possibly participate. A just sense of his own injuries rendered it extremely difficult to the pragmatical Mr. Hill to sit at the same steward's-room table with the artful *intrigante* who had encouraged him into proposals for her hand, only that she might intercept his views upon her aunt's strong-box, by consulting Mrs. Mopsome about the prudence of accepting her worthy friend Mr. Hill, and exhibiting his letters. And, though wounded

to the quick by her undisguised flirtations with Ernest, and abominable system of torturing his self-love by talking French in his presence to Béchameil and the foreign valets,—a language of which he understood as little as Chateaubriand, the translator of Milton, of English,—it would have been as fool-hardy for a single gentleman's own man to pretend to be a match for the duchess's own woman, on her own privileged ground, as for Young England to come to the scratch with Old England, on the stage trodden by Fox and Pitt.

One morning at breakfast, having stolen into the lower regions with Lewson before the eyes of the great ladies were open, I heard them discussing the expected arrival of Comte Jules de Messignac, an *attaché* of the French embassy; which they seemed to fancy was to restore the dead to life, and kill on the spot all who pretended to be alive.

Mrs. Lewson and the other ladies of the bed-chamber were all day long *en papillotes*;—so eager was their rivalry to be distinguished

by a certain Jasmin, who ministered to the irresistibility of the count; while the suites of the German princes had been voted from the first, savages, with whom it was degradation to consort;—savages who actually cleaned their master's boots and brushed their coats!—I doubt whether Lewson would have considered even the German governor worthy of a smile!—

On the other hand, the amazement of these *Kammerdieners* and *heiduks* at the gorgeousness and *dolce far niente* of English servitude, was beyond expression! The duchess's standard footmen, full-powdered and with the silk stockings drawn as by a capstan over their silver-gartered legs, evidently mistaking for K. G.'s, they, at first sight, deferentially saluted; the whole valetocracy of the Holy Roman Empire being unequal to furnish as much fine linen as figured in the starched cravats and corazzas of these dandies of the shoulder-knot.

And then, the *lits de maitres* provided for them—for them, accustomed to *lits*

de sangle, or even worse,—and the servants whose province it was to wait upon the servants, convinced them that if, as they had been always taught, England was the paradise of horses, it was no less so of two footed beasts of burthen. Servants sitting down four times a day to luxurious meals, and at those sacred hours as unattackable by the claims of their masters as if at church, appeared to *their* serf-like experience worthy of the *Pays de Cogne*, where the pheasants fly about ready roasted.

Shall I ever forget the glance cast by Monsieur Jasmin at the hands of the German servants,—hands accustomed to brave not only the inclemency of the elements, but the labours of life! For Jasmin was ineffable as a fashionable novelist; and his own lily-whites, habitually encased in the preservatives of Privat and Spiegelhalter, blushed at the idea of being classed with extremities so plebeian, and devoted to such base uses.

The day following Count Jules's arrival, the duchess, having accompanied her lady guests

to an archery-meeting held in the park of a neighbouring baronet, to which she did not like to take me or Fido, (the dogs of her country neighbours being such vulgar creatures, that she could not bear to see us so *encanaillé*—or as Lewson called it “*unkennelly*,”)—I was left to amuse myself at home ; and could not resist the temptation of hiding myself under the table in the steward’s room when the ladies’ ladies left the gentlemen’s gentlemen to their wine ; to ascertain whether they indulged, at that privileged moment, in the same scandal as their masters.

But as it happened that Hilgrove, the house steward, was laid up with the gout, the foreigners alone were left ; consisting of Bécha-meil, his grace’s valet, and the Swabian savages who would have very much preferred their meerschaums and beer, to the bottle of exquisite Médoc given by our people in honour of Monsieur Jasmin, which filled the room with the fragrance of a bouquet of scabious.

Powers above !—how those Frenchmen *did* jabber ;—and for once, how they *did habiller*

their lords and ladies!—As to England, they cast their shoe over it,—or even their *savate* ! Their criticisms were, however, concentrated in a *chansonnette* sung by Monsieur Jasmin, at Béchameil's request, with unanimous applause ; which, though little better than the poetry of the piper who plays before Moses (and Co). I shall give at full length, for the benefit of the foreign *valetaille* of Great Britain.

CHANSONNETTE.

Londres! qu'on m' a tant vanté,
 J'ai vu ta longue cité
 J'ai vu ta large Tamise,—
 De Saint Paul la haute eglise,—
 Tes ponts, dont l'on ne voit rien,—
 Non rien,—non rien!—
 Et les trottoirs, qui sont bien!—
 Mais Paris a plus d'élégance—
 Eh ! vive la France !—

Anglais !—je suis peu jaloux
 Des biens qu'on trouve chez vous.
 Que votre nation si fière
 Vante son charbon,—sa bière !—

J aime mieux le vin
Le vin, le vin !—
De ce jus vraiment divin
L'Anglais dit, quand il pense,
Eh ! vive la France !—

Le soleil en ce pays
Vaut il la lune de Paris ?—
Cette atmosphère de cendre
Qui ne cesse de descendre
Sur le visage et partout,
Partout,—partout,—
Anglais ! n'est pas de mon goût !—
Pour respirer avec aisance,
Eh ! vive la France !—

Au boit, l'hiver et l'été,
De l'eau chaude avec du thé ;
Toujours le pain en tartine,
Le Rosbif, pour toute cuisine ;
Et quelquefois un ragoût
Sans goût, sans goût,—
Dieu ! quel ennui,—quel dégout !—
Pour la chère et l'abondance
Eh ! vive la France !—

Deux cens Dimanches Anglais,
N'en valent pas un Français !—

Ce jour, si joyeux en France
Est leur jour de pénitence ;
Et lorsqu'un Anglais se pend,
Se pend, se pend,
C'est un Dimanche qu'il prend !—
A Paris, le Dimanche, on danse—
Eh ! vive la France !—

Glorieux sur tous les points
Des combats à coups de poings
L'Anglais vante la noblesse,
Et se grise en prêchant sagesse,
Il voit chez lui tout en bien ?—
C'est bien,—c'est bien !—
Pour moi, je n'en pense rien ?—
Pour la gaité,—pour la vaillance,
Eh ! vive la France !—

Le climat est des plus beaux
Pour les boeufs, pour les chevaux ;
C'est à l'humide nature
Qu'on doit la saine pâture
Qui les fait aller *presto*—
Presto—presto !
Tant mieux !—On en sort plutôt ?—
Pour jouir, sans un bien immense,
Eh ! VIVE LA FRANCE !

The burthen of the song was vigorously

chorussed by Monsieur Jasmin's two countrymen, closing the last stanza by a bumper of claret and an uproarious hurrah,—

“ Prafo, prafo !”—cried Herr Breitenstein, his Serene Highness the Prince of Saxe Krautland's *durchlauchtige Kammerdiener*. —
“ Vat vitz !—*Ach Herr !*—how it bites !—*ça mord*,—*ça mord !*”

A compliment resented as ironical by the indignant Monsieur Jasmin, into whose heels my patriotic teeth, at that moment, inserted a pretty sharp criticism upon his ungrateful insolence.—Could I lie still under the table and hear my country abused? No, no !—

A tous les chiens bien nés, que le patrie est chère ?

Herr Breitenstein was right! *ça mordait*; and to the bone !

CHAPTER II.

If he swagger, let him not come here. No ! by my faith
I'll no swaggerers. I am in good name and fame with the very
best. Shut the door !

SHAKSPEARE.

Exuerint sylvestrem animum ; cultuque frequenti,
In quascunque voces artes, haud tarda sequentur.

VIRGIL.

WHEN I recounted my feat to Fido, it struck me that he was less gratified than it deserved by my effusion of *amor patriæ*. There was a malicious twinkle in his jealous old eye, as though he foresaw some sort of triumph over me. In the course of the evening, the mystery was explained.

I need scarcely apprise my readers that my predominating hour of the four-and-twenty was during the hour, or half hour, after dinner

in the drawing-room, when the ladies, heartily sick of each other, beguiled the time while waiting the arrival of the gentlemen by a *variorum* edition of the scandals of the day, and by ecstasies concerning the duchess's pets.—It was then I was apostrophized as “beauty”—“darling”—“treasure;”—invited from lap to lap,—luxuriating, now on satin, now on brocade,—smothered with kisses,—and smoothed over by taper fingers on which sparkled all the jewels of the East. It was then that Fido used to glare upon me, like Charles Kean in Richard, looking an ounce of corrosive sublimate at Buckingham.

But on the evening in question,—(I would fain relate the sad reverse with the delicate tact with which Napoleon's bulletins converted the retreat from Moscow into a triumph!)—on the painful evening in question, I was utterly disregarded,—nay,—pshawed away as a bore! Count Jules had brought with him from town a poodle recently arrived from Paris, with which those foolish women were already “infatuated;”—one of those contemptible mounte-

banks admitted into society, like a dining-out-man, solely on pretext of being amusing ;—a beast as well got up as Lord Algernon Howarth, —of spotless complexion,—all cant and affectation and milk of roses ;—fawning and flattering,—at every one's beck,—and as full of tricks as a pack of cards.

I do not remember to have felt more disgusted than by the undue importance assigned by the duchess to this intrusive charlatan. It is true she was in the habit of patronizing foreign performers ; and I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of appealing to your sympathies, dear British public, on a point where they have so frequently felt the spur.

There was I,—a genuine English dog,—a dog whose race had for centuries barked the bark of English undefiled,—a dog pupped on the land of liberty, where Hampden bled in the field and Sidney on the scaffold ;—a dog that never failed to wag its loyal tail when the national anthem was performed, or to stand stoutly on its four legs when “ Rule Britannia ” assured the assembled world that “ Britons

never would be slaves,"—(though I could not exactly find out who had asked them,)—here was I,—I say, a dog educated in the graceful do-nothingness becoming my royal origin,—compelled to see preferred before me a beast actually trained to gain a livelihood by being amusing!—

At the duchess's slightest suggestion, the brute not only performed the manual exercise, and smoked its cigar as loungingly as though standing on the steps at Crockford's,—but danced the Minuet de la Cour like a Lord of the Bedchamber, and went through the *poses* of the lion of the capitol—Thorwaldsen's lion—the monumental lion of the Swiss guard,—and the Belgic lion of the plain of Waterloo,—a whole den of lions concentrated in his single person,—till he became the lion of the hour. And all the time he was accomplishing these marvels, the raptures of his fair auditory kept pace with his efforts.

"What a resource against *ennui*!—What a charming companion!—What an angel of a dog!"

“ After all, King Charleses are stupid little things,” cried the flippant Lady Bingley —(a very echo to the seat where fashion is throned !) “ They do nothing to amuse one !—Great sameness and great tameness in little dogs of that description !”

“ *Moustache apporte !*”—cried the “ infatuated” duchess,—after placing a beautiful Louis Quatorze fan adorned with medallions of enamel in the carved sticks, within view of the new favourite, on a table covered with beautiful Dresden china; on which he leapt with the lightness of Cerito, and bringing down the trophy in his mouth, without suffering so much as the tip of his tail to discompose those Saxon shepherdesses, deployed the fan at the feet of her grace ;—presenting it to her open, in the chivalrous attitude of an Hidalgo tendering the *Abanico* to his Andalusian love.

The room rang with applause ; and as Lady Rosamel, who on quitting the dining-room always repaired to the nursery to see her children in bed, at that moment made her appearance, an encore was loudly demanded for the

benefit of the marchioness ;—whereupon the duchess replaced the fan within reach of the frizzled coxcomb !

I had borne all the rest ! But I could not endure to see a smile from the sweet face of Lady Rosamel bestowed on another.—To please her, I endured every morning, without a murmur, the torment of being carried about in a basket by her little girl ; or dressed in daisy chains by the nurse for the amusement of her youngest boy.—To please her, I ordered my comings and goings in her presence with the discreet sobriety calculated to win the good opinion of one who, forgetting her own youth and beauty in those of her children, proved by being the most devoted of mothers, that she had been the most affectionate of wives.

Instead, therefore, of allowing the odious foreigner to engage her attention as he had done that of others of the party, I suffered my feelings so far to get the better of me, as to leap from the floor to a *fauteuil*,—from the *fauteuil* to the table ;—and darting upon the fan, while the obsequious politeness of the tutored brute

nailed him motionless to the ground, in compliment to the privileged dog of the house,—I began to tear it to pieces with my teeth. In a moment, I contrived to crunch one of the delicate ivory sticks, as though it had been a chicken-bone !

What pretty shrieks and cries arose on all sides !

“ The little creature is positively jealous !” cried Lady Bingley. “ Rattle cannot bear, my dear duchess, to see you bestow the slightest attention on another dog !”

“ *Mais c'est un Orosmane que ce cher petit amour !*”—exclaimed Madame von Trichstein ; on which Lady Jane, with a fellow-feeling for *any* animal tormented by the pangs of jealousy, took me into her arms from the table where I was sitting amidst the fragments of the broken fan, like Marius among the ruins of Carthage, and lavished on me a thousand caresses.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin ! Scarcely a woman present but sympathised with all her heart and soul in the envy,

dignified by the name of jealousy, to which my frantic act was imputed !

I say "*scarcely*," because the only one I desired to interest was, alas ! an exception. With anguish of spirit I heard her mildly assert that "the dog ought to be punished for so mischievous a trick !"—And though the duchess, so far from taking her daughter-in-law's advice, instantly began to applaud a proceeding concerning the merit of which she had been previously in doubt, *her* weak indulgence did not console me for the wise displeasure of Lady Rosamel.—All I could think of, in alleviation, was that just in the same mild tone of reprehension did she pronounce sentence upon the faults of the children she loved so dearly.

Devoted as I was to the marchioness, there were two other persons in the house quite as much her slaves as the little dog ;—those Philadelphi, the old Earl of Horsham and old Charley Marston !—By some strange defect of perception, these twin brothers could never bring themselves to believe that the fifty

years they had lived in the world, assigned them more than five-and-twenty a-piece; and by dint of careful getting-up,—mirific balsam, patent leather, caoutchouc belts, a great deal of Cartwright and a great deal of Inkson, —they managed to retain the *faux air* of youth one sees in a last year's *pomme d'apis*, or a frost-bitten China rose.—No wear or tear of head or heart had militated against their perpetual juvenility!

“Those fellows grow younger every year!” observed, on their arrival at the Castle, the Duke of Wigmore, of whom they were almost contemporaries. “If they go on at this rate, some years hence I shall have them coming in nankins and jackets!”

But that they could carry their miscalculations so far as to fancy themselves in love with his son's widow, did not enter his head. Just as he had originally chosen to consider her no match for the Marquis of Rosamel, he now thought it impossible she could ever become a match for any one else; least of all for his old friend Horsham,—a beau at poor Rosamel's christening!

A moment's reflection would have brought to his grace's memory that his friend Horsham, and his friend Horsham's brother, old Charley, had been through life so much the dupe of their imaginations, that nothing could be more likely than that one or both, (but they WERE but one!) should fancy himself a worthy successor to one of the most charming young men in the kingdom.

In the first place Lord Horsham, who with a noble fortune had the soul of a mouse, and could not receive change for a sovereign without counting it, having been complimented at a splendid public banquet given in his borough by his tenants on the attainment of his majority, upon the liberality of his public views, and the generosity of his individual nature, "a generosity and liberality worthy the ancient virtues of the House of Marston," had ever since been stuffing himself with straw by way of filling out the vast outline traced for him by his dependants.

As a landlord, the per centage he had tutored himself into returning to his tenants at

his audits, was as a pound of flesh cut from his heart!—But still, the voice of the mayor of Guzzledown seemed to resound in his ears, proclaiming the “ancient virtues of the House of Marston.”—As a borough-holder, he espoused the cause of the people; his mouth watering all the while after government loaves and fishes,—masterships of the buckhounds for himself and junior lordships of the Treasury for his *alter idem* Charley,—till every succeeding election became pain and grief to him;—while as regarded his vote in the peers, he remained as dumb as he often wished himself deaf!—

Still, at the cost of his comfort, his purpose was achieved. The Earl of Horsham was likely to pass to posterity as one of the most liberal of mankind, though every crevice of his heart was stopped against the claims of humanity as by Poo Loo’s cement; so that he never passed the county gaol or lunatic asylum, without secretly exclaiming against the folly of building palaces for madmen and felons.

The delusions of Charley Marston were of a different nature. A college indiscretion, the evil report of which had been judiciously transferred to his honourable shoulders by a Trinity chum, intended for the church, prematurely inflicted the name of a man of gallantry on one born with the conviction that the purpose of the fair sex in this world is to sweep rooms and sew on buttons. And through life, he had been smiling and smirking,—whispering and looking unutterable things,—as if condemned to fifty years' hard labour in the durance vile of the Loves and Graces;—a ladies' man by the utmost rigour of the laws of society.

The two brothers thus strangely betrayed out of their vocation, seemed to comfort themselves for their assumption in the eyes of the world, by being all themselves to each other. Lord Horsham played the curmudgeon exclusively towards Charley Marston; who, with a patrimony of five thousand pounds, fancied he had some claim on “the well-known liberality” of a brother in the enjoyment of twenty

thousand per annum ;—while Charley, so far from being betrayed into matrimony or anything the least like it, by the tenderness of nature imputed to him, adhered to the bachelor tenement originally assigned him in the house of his fathers, both in town and country, inextirpable as the dry-rot !

By degrees, the old twins had mutually fretted into each other's nature, and reconsolidated themselves into one. — If anything were likely to halve them again, it was the passion for Lady Rosamel experienced by both ; unless, indeed, the attachment of Charley was merely one of those vapourish sentimentalities in which he fancied himself called upon to indulge for the maintenance of his usurped reputation as a lady-killer.

Of neither moiety of a man was I in the slightest degree jealous ; Lady Rosamel being the last woman in the world to become the dupe of an impostor.—The light of truth was in her calm clear eye ; and her heart being buried in the grave, she judged the things of this world exclusively through the medium of her mind.

The only thing indeed that amused me in Lord Horsham's courtship, was the conviction of the Duchess of Wigmore that it was great presumption on the part of an ancient Earl, in the enjoyment of twenty thousand a year, to pretend to the hand of *her* daughter-in-law ; though Lady Rosamel's jointure was small and her honours by courtesy, and the duke had not the smallest intention of ceding his place at Wigmore Castle to her son, for a quarter of a century to come.—The duchess could not, however, accuse the young marchioness of encouraging *either* of the superannuated philanthropers, beyond the courtesies due to every guest in the house of her father-in-law.

There was another love-affair going on in the house, which afforded me more entertainment.

“How absurd of the dear duchess to invite Lord Algernon Howarth here with the hope of renewing the flirtation between him and her niece, after having failed so signally last year !” observed the spiteful Lady Bingley to Roper, one evening when I was lying on the sofa between them,—in the whisper suitable to the

atmosphere of a saloon afflicted by two whist-
tables and a dozing duke. "A beauty is seldom
improved by another London season! One
is beginning to be a little *too* sure that Lady
Jane Barnsford has bones as well as skin!"

Roper, who cared nothing about bones, or
skins, except as regarded the duties upon
them in the quarter's revenue, replied by a
blank smile of indifference, which the lady ac-
cepted as an invitation to proceed.—

"I remember the duchess assuring me last
spring, that all her civilities to Lord Algernon
were directed, *through him*, to Sir Seymour
Manners. And now Sir Seymour has be-
taken himself elsewhere, she will probably
discover that she was only civil to *him* as the
friend of Lord Algernon Howarth!"

As the representative of a Wigmore bo-
rough, Roper felt in some degree pledged
to defend the cause of the duchess, now
that the borough of his friend Algy had
ceased to be an object; and he accordingly
betrayed his quondam friend by declaring,
not only that Lady Jane had refused Lord

Algernon two years before, but that his subsequent excesses were produced by vexation, at her preference of his friend Sir Seymour.

"You will say next, I suppose, that Lady Jane Barnsford refused Lord Sark!" exclaimed Lady Bingley,—with the spite of every envious woman at hearing conquests imputed to another. And, more veracious with *her* than with Sir Seymour when so successfully endeavouring to prevent his proposals to Lady Jane, Roper replied, "Certainly! I know it from the best authority."

"Lady Jane herself, of course!"

"No—Lord Sark's father and mother;—who, as country neighbours of my father, and very little in town, applied to me to know something about Lady Wormington and her daughter, before they sanctioned their son's offer of his hand."

"And has the Duke of Normanford also been consulting you about sanctioning *Lord Algernon's* addresses!" cried Lady Bingley, who was indebted for her place in society to the freshness of her blonde, and trimness of her person.

“ Pardon me !—Lady Jane Barnsford is perfectly known at Normanford Court.—Lady Ellen Howarth is her intimate friend.—In *their* sphere, no need of explanations about antecedents.”

Touchy, like all *parvenues*, Lady Bingley, fancying herself talked at, blushed two degrees deeper than the delicate rouge she was in the habit of wearing, which lay upon her cheek like a snow drift upon sandstone.

“ The Normanford family would be delighted if the match should still take place,” added Roper,—determined to maintain over the fair scandalmonger the superiority of the file over the viper. “ But if Lady Jane refused Algy when his prospects were so brilliant, she is scarcely likely to accept him *now* that he is more than half ruined.”

Lady Bingley was beginning to say that “ after the *exposé* about Lord Hardenbrass, Lady Jane ought to be glad to accept *any one* !”—when their whispers and the silent rubbers those whispers purported to respect,

were suddenly interrupted by peals of laughter from the adjoining chamber.

Too well, alas! did I recognize that hateful sound! Every night, when the circle was at its dullest, Madame von Trichstenstein and Count Jules,—Lord Algernon and Lady Jane,—used to steal off into the gallery, where their diversions were less likely to disturb the calculations of the whist-players, to be amused, by the comicalities of Monsieur Moustache,—though the quotidian pun made three hundred and sixty-five days in the year by the late Sir Ralph Milbank, must have presented as agreeable a variety. Lord Horsham and Marston attached themselves to the happy quartette, by way of proving that they belonged to the junior branches of the party; while the young Prince of Saxe-Krautland, who was dying to join it, did not venture more than a peep at them through the door, lest the learned baron, his governor, should vote the diversion *kindseimlich*.

That superficial animal, Moustache, doubtless flattered himself that the ecstasies of

these foolish people were genuine tributes of applause, instead of a mere pretext for throwing off the dulness of the saloon; and his patrons kept demanding and redemanding a repetition of his antics till his strength was nearly exhausted, like that of poor Cerito after a second *encore*, and then sent him supperless to bed;—in this respect, worse used than other comical gentlemen invited out to be entertaining, who are at least permitted to imbibe good things in return for those they have supplied.

I pitied him—I sincerely pitied the “infatuation” of his assurance!—For Moustache, deluded by a bad precedent, evidently conceived that, being naturalized in a half-civilized country, it was his office to give the law in matters of taste, like Count d’Orsay, to its vandals of puppies!—Whereas the antics of his coxcombicality served only as a pretext for the genuine mirth extracted by Count Jules out of Madame von Trichstenstein, at the expense of the rest of the party.

Nor could I help fancying that, after the

sojourn of the little coterie in the gallery to witness his performances, the countenance of Lady Jane was less dejected.—She was resuming, if not her spirits, her spirit. It does not become a little dog to decide whether this were owing to the talents of Algernon Howarth, or the histrionic genius of Moustache.

CHAPTER III.

Why this is he
 Who kiss'd away his paw in courtesy.
 This is the ape of form—Monsieur the nice,
 Who when he plays at hazard, chides the dice
 In honourable terms;—nay, he can bring
 A fan when bidden,—and, in ushering,
 Mend him who can.—The ladies call him sweet;
 The stairs as he treads on them, kiss his feet.—
 And consciences that are not short of cash
 Pay him the due of “honey-tongued Moustache.”

SHAKSPEARE.

Qui bellus canis est, Cotta, pusillus canis est.

MARTIAL.

I LEFT my reader to ponder, while turning over the leaf, on the impertinence of its concluding phrase, and afford him the triumph of exclaiming—“the vanity of these little dogs!”—

Yet, honour bright, I do not know that *we* are more apt to over-estimate ourselves than other people. Human nature, as well as canine nature, is a despising and perverse generation. Patrician despises plebeian,—gentle, simple,—the man of business, the man of letters,—the man of letters, the artist,—the country-gentleman, the courtier,—the fine gentleman, the boor;—each, perhaps, with as little justification as the subscriber to a circulating library, in looking down upon *me*, Rattle, a star of the first magnitude in *canis minor*.—For you do nothing for *my* amusement, scornful reader!—while I flatter myself I am administering largely to your own.

Now my pride is up, indeed, I am free to confess that I consider the general importance of my species considerably under-rated.—It is true we have a representative in parliament, in the person of Mr. Liddell; and that the Vandyck of the day devotes himself to our transmission to posterity, as Lely to the beauties of King Charles. But historians have scarcely done justice to the great part we have

played in the world, from the days of Cerberus to those of your humble servant.

There is comfort, however, in reflecting that it is chiefly by the inferior classes of society our consequence is impugned.—Catherine the Great,—an empress who used to give away, as new year's gifts, estates equalling in extent and population an English county, and who, when she wanted a new book, sent and bought an author to make one, as she would have purchased a baker to knead her rolls, hazarded but one attempt at poetry in her imperial life, which was an epitaph on her lapdog :

Ci git la Duchesse Anderson,
Qui mordit Monsieur Rogerson !—

an effusion which few crowned heads, except Ludwig I. of Bavaria, have surpassed.

Byron, on the other hand, perpetuated in the monument at Newstead, his attachment to a dog whom he bewailed as his only friend :—

I never knew but one,—and here he lies.

But though this epitaph was dedicated to a .

greater beast by a greater poet, I confess I prefer the touching naïveté remarkable in the lines of Catherine the Great. *Her* distich is evidently the effusion of a mind accustomed to perpetual courtiership. — Of the merits of her favourite, the empress had only noticed that it knew how to bite! How sure a proof that she lived surrounded by courtiers whose principal accomplishment consists in mutual morsure!

Shakspeare went further, and introduced us alive and barking on the stage, among his unrivalled *dramatis personæ*;—the Crab of Launce the serving man, being the first comical dog of the Elizabethan age.

The most eminent of mankind, in short, from the days of Ulysses and his Argus, have been our greatest patrons. That monstrous tyrant, Frederick of Prussia, was a slave to his dogs. Louis XIII., whom his young wife dared scarcely accost, allowed his bed to be torn to pieces every morning by two favourite greyhounds. While as to your mere men of letters or science, all the world knows that Newton did but one silly thing in his life,

which was in favour of the identical little dog whose unlucky trespass of demolishing a year's work of calculations, he so generously forgave.

The witty Horace Walpole desired no better company, for days together, than that of his four-footed darling. Even the great Sir Walter was seldom seen, either in life or on canvas, unaccompanied by his dog. The accomplished author of *Vathek* devoted his latter days to adorning the grave of a lost favourite; and Alexandre Dumas has been nearly precipitated into one, by his passion for his Newfoundlander.

After such examples, let the *menu fretin* attack me as injuriously as they please!—*Which* of the gnat-like swarm of daily, weekly, or monthly critics, who fancy themselves my betters, would have been distinguished by these great men with similar favour? As Ancient Pistol would say,

“ A fico for their snarlings base!—Vile curs
Who bay the bay-crown'd with a bootless bark!
The little dogs and all cry ‘out upon them.’ ”

As regards myself, indeed, I have no hesi-

tation in admitting that the nearest derogation I ever made into companionship with a literary man, was with the empty coxcomb cramming for parliament, whom it was my fortune to see varnish his mind with French polish, as he would have varnished his boots. But though boasting little acquaintance among men of letters, unlimited is my acquaintance among men of franks; and pending my introduction to the marble balls of royalty, I hold it something to have been distinguished by the notice of the Duke of Wigmores, the last of the *Grand Seigneurs*.

For, alas! the *grand seigneurs* are departing! While the race of Charles the Second's lap-dogs flourishes in pristine purity, the race of his courtiers has become extinct! The roué lords described by Grammont, who in their bags and swords under the house of Hanover, were charmingly distinguished by the name of "men of *quality*," forfeited all claim to the epithet from the time that, not content with being called *loose* they chose to be considered FAST!—The moment lords and stage-coachmen

came to be placed on a level by the use of the universal language called slang, the House of Peers was as perilously undermined as by the hand of Guy Fawkes!

But, as I said before, there was a touch of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in John, Duke of Wigmore. Right or wrong, his actions were on a noble scale. The porticos of Inigo Jones did not look too lofty when he walked under them. His well-turned shoulder seemed formed for a blue riband; and he was the very man to bear a white wand at a coronation, and sleep under crimson velvet at last!

Put him into a profession, and he would probably have stuck fast,—an obstacle in the way of other people. But to his natural position, he was as well proportioned as an elephant to a jungle, or a cedar-tree to Mount Lebanon,—a *grand seigneur* “to the manner born.”

When the time came for the departure of the Teutonic strangers within his gates, his grace made it his duty to accompany them as far as their destination, as he would have re-

galized his hospitalities by welcoming royalty to his roof, at the foot of the stairs: and *his* departure was of course the signal for breaking up the party at Wigmore Castle. Count Jules, Count Jasmin, and the other perfumed monkey in his suite, returned to the foggy latitudes of Manchester Square.

No sooner were they gone, than the housekeeper, who protested that new papering and painting would scarcely suffice to purify from tobacco smoke the apartments slept in by the German visitors, was almost as vociferous against the odour of *patchouli* bequeathed by the French valet and French poodle. We have all heard that when the royal graves at St. Denis were opened and plundered during the first French revolution, the body of St. Mégrin, the minion of Henry III., was recognised by the Italian perfumes it still emitted. And I am persuaded that the mummy of the beast Moustache, after two centuries' interment, will also give out an effluvium of musk!—As the housekeeper truly said, “them scented fops had a'most pisoned the 'ouse!”

Recalling to mind the systematic Penelopeism of the duchess when undergoing temporary widowhood, I was overjoyed by the prospect of finding myself alone again in a petticoat party. The dear marchioness and her children, indeed, had still some weeks unexpired of their stay at the castle. But Lady Jane had been already sent for home to Barnsford; and it was probably the *gêne* which the duchess apprehended from a *tête-à-tête* with her daughter-in-law, that induced her to solicit a visit from another of her relations almost as cold and uncongenial as Lady Rosamel, on the principle, perhaps, that two negatives make an affirmative.

The moment Lady Elizabeth Vernon made her appearance, I became her most obedient humble dog! A widow, who was "a widow indeed," I beheld in her the *beau idéal* of

That sweet saint who sat by Russell's side.

So far, however, was her gravity from being harsh or austere, that it was mild and steadfast as the light of the moon on an unclouded night!

In *her* train came none of the saucy varlets in plush and tags,—none of the scented Monsieur Jasmins,—none of the furbelowed Frenchified dames, looking like actresses out of an engagement,—who used to accompany the Bingley class of visitors. She brought with her only an elderly *suivante*, grave and gentle as herself; her attendant through life, after being the nurse of her only son; and I would give a maravedi to have had portraits of those two women, by Van Dyck or Van Helst, to place in my gallery of female worthies.

For the first four and twenty hours of our acquaintance, it puzzled me sorely to guess why Lady Elizabeth Vernon maintained habits of intimacy with people so wholly unsympathetic with her nature as her Wigmore clan. For there are times when members of the beau monde think no more of dropping their relations, if bores, than *I* should of cutting my snarling brother, Dash, if I met him in the park, ambling by the side of the fat footman of some Baker Street dowager, or more correctly, of some Mrs. Tomkins, senior.

But I soon found that this excellent woman was grateful to the duke for having espoused the interests of her son on his entrance into life. And if the dyeing, dressy, duchess were less to her taste, towards the young Marchioness of Rosamel and her children, she entertained feelings of the sincerest affection.

It was like taking shelter in a shady fragrant shrubbery on a scorching day in July, to find oneself *en tiers* between those twain, after being buried in Brussels lace and affectation, by the dear duchess and her satellites. As I once heard Lady Elizabeth observe, with a deep sigh to her faithful old Pasley, just such a woman as Lady Rosamel would have been the daughter-in-law of her choice; nor could she understand how the Wigmores had hesitated in their approval of her as theirs. The object of all *her* hopes was to bless her grandchildren before she died; and though she had already despoiled herself for the advantage of her son, to a degree that would have cut him to the soul had he been aware of her privations, gladly would she have sa-

crificed all and everything that was left her, to secure his happy marriage.

But of this, there was little prospect. For alas! this beloved only son, dear reader, was, as you have probably conjectured, no other than the Vernon of "poor Mary!"

No sooner had I discovered this, than it went to my heart to watch the wistful glances cast by that noble lady at the little Marquis of Rosamel and his brothers, to whom she appeared to attach herself even more than to the elders of the party. Nor did Lady Rosamel remonstrate against her intrusion into the school-room when the children were pursuing their studies, or the nursery where the least and loveliest was sporting on its nurse's knees; having no interruption to fear from one, who, in her turn, was evidently taking a lesson, and luxuriating, by anticipation, in the joys of grand-maternity.

Grievous, most grievous to know that these natural yearnings were doomed to disappointment!

Though far from a canting little dog, and

not the least of a *béguen*, it was impossible not to prefer the claims of a woman, who, blameless through life, had, on ceasing to be a wife, remained solely and exclusively a mother,—wedded to the honour of her son, as formerly to that of his father,—before those of a fallen angel, like poor Mary; who, though she *might* have been all these things if born in a happier sphere, had succumbed to temptation the moment temptation was thrown in her way.

By nature gentle and modest, but for the abuses and misconstruction of society, these virtues might have fructified into excellence. But it will not do to go on moon-raking after what *might* have been, while that which is stares one in the face, in the shape of such perfection of feminine distinction as that of Lady Elizabeth Vernon!—If the victims of social corruption obtained as much sympathy as those who are superior to victimization, they would, in fact, cease to be victims; and the abuses to which they have been sacrificed would call less vehemently for reform.

One evening, while waiting in the drawing-room the ringing of the dressing-bell, (the duchess dozing in an easy chair, so easy that it might have rendered somnolent a person with whom one of the most brilliant talkers of the day was conversing, I heard Lady Rosamel complimenting Lady Elizabeth Vernon on the parliamentary distinctions of her son.

“To me,” she observed, “Mr. Vernon’s speeches possess sufficient merit in the moderation of his views, the consistency of his purposes, and the forcible language in which they are conveyed.—But I am no politician, and admire the Ionic temple simply as it presents itself; without understanding the worship to which it is dedicated.—Those, however, who are better skilled to appreciate Mr. Vernon’s public importance, assign him far higher honours—I have heard the first men of the day, of both parties, name him as likely to stand in the foremost rank of British statesmen.”

“I believe him to be indeed highly thought

of among those whose praise is fame,"—replied Lady Elizabeth, in the same low voice, which purported to respect the slumbers of the dozing lady on whose knees *I* was, as usual, wide awake.—“And this perhaps ought to suffice for my happiness, as it does for my pride.—But the heart has its ambitions, my dear Emily, as well as the head.—Were I to behold this idolized son prime minister, and securing the welfare of the kingdom, it would not content me, unless I knew him to be enjoying the triumph of a good man in private life, as well as of a great one in public. And though the duchess assures me I ought to esteem myself the most fortunate of mothers, because George is too busy with politics to burthen himself with a wife, I shall never be easy till he has what Bacon calls ‘given hostages to fortune,’ by becoming a family man.—Till then, his character and career are incomplete.”

“Depend upon it, your patience will not be *very* severely tried,” replied Lady Rosamel, with a smile, betrayed by the firelight.—“A

man who lives so much in society as Mr. Vernon, and is so general an object of regard, will not be allowed to become a *very* old bachelor !”

“ You are mistaken,—quite mistaken, my dear child !” — said her companion, with stronger emphasis.—“ George does *not* live in the world.—He goes nowhere. With *his* connexions and attractions, my son might command what invitations he pleased.—But the duchess assures me that she did not meet him in society, twice last season.”

“ She may not have noticed him !”

“ She could hardly have failed to do so, had she been in his company,” replied the proud mother.—“ But even had *she* overlooked him, the newspapers would *not*;—and the Morning Post, (on that point a sufficient authority,) never mentions his name as present at a fashionable party.”

“ But there is so much society in London besides large parties !”

“ Not the sort of society where acquaintance and matches are made. George is quoted as

present at levees, Speaker's dinners, or public meetings,—not exactly the places to promote my views!"

"And to what then do you impute his secession from society?"—inquired Lady Rosamel, with an ingenuous naïveté worthy of one of Albert Durer's pictures; the answer being altogether worthy the question!—For to these chaste and high-minded women the gossips of fashionable life would no more have dared report a tale of scandal, than repeat it at the altar!

"My misgivings on the subject are the cause of some uneasiness,"—replied Lady Elizabeth. "Sometimes, I fear it originates in ill-health;—at others, I flatter myself it is only indolence;—of two evils the least! But the results are equally vexatious. By living alone, and devoting himself exclusively to political life, George will become shy, reserved, morose,—an oddity,—a whimsical old bachelor; and at length marry in the decline of life, when the qualities of his nature best calculated to attach the heart of his wife, are impaired for ever."

“Mr. Vernon is perhaps ambitious,”—said Lady Rosamel;—“and ambition, you know, is a jealous mistress.”

“When I saw more of my son,” replied Lady Elizabeth, “I fancied he coveted distinction only as a passport to something better. He *used* to talk of the happiness of sharing his honours with a beloved wife. But now——”

“*What* is that you were saying about *honours*?”—cried the duchess, suddenly starting from her sleep, at the sound of a word thrice sacred in the ears of a whistplayer. “Is it a double game, or a single?”

I longed to reply “single,—which a fond mother will vainly endeavour to render otherwise.” But the dressing bell,—that matter-of-fact interpolation amid the flightiness of life, at that moment restored us all to a sense of our situation.

Matrimony was fated to be just then the subject of discussion at Wigmore Castle!—After dinner, came the northern post; bringing, among other letters, one from Lady Jane Barnsford;—the contents of which, though the

duchess forbore to disclose to her two sage companions, she canvassed freely with Lewson on retiring for the night.

Poor Lady Jane, whom the world was pitying for the rupture of her marriage with Lord Hardenbrass, and whom her aunt was commiserating for the desertion of Sir Seymour Manners, wrote, it seems, in the highest spirits: and from the repeated allusions to the happiness she had enjoyed at “dear Wigmore,”—(a spot which, so far from “dear”-ing, she was in the habit of holding remarkably cheap,) as well as from her entreaty that the duchess would ascertain from her *protégé* Mr. Roper whether Lord Algernon Howarth were likely to visit Normanford Court for the Christmas holidays, both mistress and maid were of opinion that her soft-hearted little ladyship was once more decidedly in love.

“The mere perversity of human nature!”—cried her grace.—“She refused Lord Algernon, at the time he was a capital match; and now he is ruined and a *roué*, relents in his favour!—My only hope is that he will not

deign to be accepted as a *pis aller*; but retaliate on the former indifference of Jane."

I could have told her better! During the fortnight's sojourn made at the castle by Lord Algernon, (whom I sincerely respected as the only man sufficiently alive to my merits to expend a pony on me,) I had been a partial observer of the proceedings between him and his former love; and can attest that there was nothing of *pis-aller* in the case! Algy Howarth, who had never swerved from his first love, and who admired Mrs. Vernon only as affording some reminiscence of the unassuming gentleness of Lady Jane's temper and deportment, had been too frankly dealt with by the object of his attachment, to cherish resentful feelings.

His first idea on learning with honest feelings of regret the folly into which Sir Seymour Manners had been betrayed, was that the reaction of such an event on the mind of lady Jane might be favourable to his views; but, not sufficiently in love to overlook the fact that he had not wherewithal left to render his pro-

posals available, he tried to persuade himself that, in accepting the invitation to Wigmore Castle, he was actuated only by a desire to obtain authentic particulars of Sir Seymour's adventure ; or, at most, to soothe the wounded feelings of his lady love. He seemed intuitively aware of the danger to which her happiness had already been exposed by the influence of her worldly aunt, exercised in a moment of pique.

On arriving at Wigmore, however and seeing his dear Lady Jane so undisguisedly disconsolate, he devoted himself without reserve to the task of consolation. It was now a matter of notoriety that Sir Seymour Manners had proceeded in Italy with Mrs. Jerningham, whose marriage was about to be dissolved by a suit in Doctor's Commons ; and by their natural lamentations over the destiny of their friend, a confidential intimacy was at once established between them. They had a subject of common interest,—a reciprocal regret ; their sympathy on which caused them to consult each other on every other.—In the gravel walk, or

ride, or drive, or dance, or chat, they singled each other out :—

Parmi tous les gens du monde,
(or rather, *tous les gens* at Wigmore Castle,)
Ils se choisissaient tous les jours !

And if no mutual declarations or avowals ensued, it was because Lord Algernon was afraid of startling the pride of Lady Jane into too close an examination of her consistency !

But I could see with half an eye, (and on so many occasions they adopted me as the chaperon of their friendship, that I had abundant opportunities of seeing with *both* halves of *both*,) that under the embroidered corazza and silken vest of Lord Algernon beat a heart as devotedly in love, as though throbbing beneath hopsack and fustian !

“ Did you happen to hear from Lord Algernon’s people whether they spend the winter at Normanford ? ”—inquired the Duchess, of Lewson ; (for in spite of her sense of obligation towards the honourable member for Grubridge, for having embellished her existence by the

possession of the most perfect of dogs, her grace was beginning to understand that if Roper's suspicions were aroused by inquiries, he would not rest till he had made mischief of some kind or other.)

And Lewson of course replied that, "not being of an inquisitive turn, she never busied herself about the affairs of others; and could assure her grace that she never dreamt of asking people's people where their masters or mistresses were going.—Only she certainly had heard Lord Algernon Howarth's Ernest hint quite promiscuous to Count Jules de Messignar's Jasmin, that, being hard up, they intended to winter in Paris."

"Thank goodness, then, Jane is safe!"—was the pious rejoinder of my gracious lady. "A younger son of any description is bad enough. But a younger son who has been reared in the vices and follies of an elder, and has no longer a shilling to indulge them, would be even a worse match than her sister Harriet's parson!"

Poor Lady Jane!—Destiny seemed to have

a spite against her gentle nature; or as the proverb hath it—" *a nave rotta ogni vento è contrario!*"—

Where there is youth, however, there is hope. Half a turn of the wheel of fortune brings those who are at its lowest to the top. Never say die! — θεου θέλονται κἂν ἐπὶ ῥίπος ωλέοις.—

CHAPTER IV.

In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm.
GRAY.

Nec morti esse locum.

VIRGIL.

IF great men would condescend to take counsel with little dogs, the lesson might sometimes be more profitable than consultations with their professional advisers, whether of law, physic, or divinity.

Had *I*, for instance, been applied to by the Duke of Normanford concerning the wisdom of enabling his son Algernon to make pro-

posals to the Marchioness of Wormington for the hand of her daughter, I should have replied, "Settle two thousand a year on him, and it will be the saving of four to the family."

Whereas General Roper, to whom he was in the habit of referring his dilemmas, contrived to persuade his grace (if his nephew's confidential letters to the duchess were to be credited,) that his son's attachment was evidently a caprice; and that marriage would afford Lord Algernon only an additional folly for repentance.

"If you mean to render the young fellow a real service, my dear duke," said the general, "give him a letter of credit and send him abroad.—The nonsense should be knocked out of him by seeing more of the world!—Lady Jane Barnsford is one of the flirting girls of the day whose name I hear oftenest at my club,—always on the eve of some match that never comes off;—and I take her to be just such another scatterbrains as himself!"

And so, on the authority of club hearsay and the peevishness of a dyspeptic old soldier, Lord Algernon was bidden, in the severest terms of prohibition, to think no more of Lady Jane!

Like Gribouille, who threw himself into the river for fear of the rain, he determined to quit the country, without a word of explanation with her, by way of sparing her feelings and his own; and the poor girl, attributing his sudden coldness to disgust at the inconsistency of her conduct, gave herself up to despair.

She uttered not, however, a word of complaint. She felt that her seeming volatility was unworthy of pity. It was only the Duchess of Wigmore who grumbled. For write what she would, her niece was not to be persuaded to join the Christmas festivities at Wigmore Castle; which, because her grace had for some weeks past found herself indisposed and out of spirits, were to be on an unusual scale of splendour.

Throughout the hunting season, Wigmore

Castle was habitually given over to what great people call the rites of hospitality; and very solemn rites they were. Every week, brought some fresh party, to assist their noble hosts in the labour of carrying onward to eternity the heavy burthen of time; some, grumbling as they went,—some, giggling;—but not a soul among them imbued with any more *real* sense of the importance of the charge, than “*l’Ane qui porte les reliques*!”—

Their quick succession, moreover, was as tedious to the eye and perplexing to the mind, as that of the hedges that fly rapidly past on a journey, indistinguishable in foliage or fragrance. All arrived with the same tune on their lips;—the *on dit* of the day, whether regarding some ministerial promotion or fashionable scandal; as monotonous as the cry of green pease or strawberries repeated successively in the streets by a hundred different voices.

Ours was not a political house. The Duke of Wigmore (like Catherine of Russia, who, as I observed just now, bought authors instead

of books,) being a maker of members of parliament, as well as of the laws which parliament is supposed to make, entertained a sovereign contempt for the details of legislation. *His* aims were of a higher nature. As Louis XIII. was called *le juste*, (though capricious as Nero,) *parcequ'il était juste à tirer de l'arquebuse*, it might be said of the Duke of Wigmore, that *his* objects rose superior to this earth ;to bring down a pheasant on the wing, being his chief accomplishment !

I could not help thinking his grace's pretensions a little *borné*. Considering the number of hours *per diem* he devoted to dressing and dieting the individual called the Duke of Wigmore, it seemed strange that the utmost purpose in life of this pampered personage should be to fill up a gamekeeper's list. I, who had lived but twelve months on the surface of the globe, was almost as useful a member of society as his grace at his three-score years !

And, by the way, on the day that, my twelve months being completed, I felt past the age

of puppydom, I sat down on my silken cushion, grave and *recueilli* as Mr. Gladstone or Robinson Crusoe, to muse upon the vicissitudes of my fate; satisfied that, since the rise of Cardinal Wolsey or Monsieur Thiers, that of Rattle, Esq. of Wigmore Castle, was the most creditable to Dame Fortune. With animated nature, the laws of matter are otherwise than with inanimate; and it is *not* the froth that rises to the top!—

Christmas came at last with its holly and folly,—its doles to the poor and claret cup to the rich. The Wigmore band performed some very alarming noises in the great hall; Mr. Hilgrove and Mrs. Lewson were permitted to issue invitations for a ball which set all the farm-houses within ten miles round into as great an ecstasy as a remission of the land-tax;—and, finally, a tremendous fall of snow, which everybody shudderingly declared to be most charming and seasonable, filled the billiard-room with crest-fallen sportmen, and the lake with wild ducks.

Two or three gay young kinsmen of the

duke, who,—though distanced from the succession by the fruitful marriage of Lord Rosamel, regarded Wigmore Castle as a common whereon to graze, when they had no better pasture,—had taken up their quarters there for the hunting season; and, sporting being out of the question, consoled themselves with private theatricals; to get up which with becoming *éclat*, a Monsieur Moustache of society, was invited from town. Nor was I surprised, on perceiving the variety of strange catastrophes to which play-acting gave rise, off the stage, among the persons of the drama, that the discreet marchioness should have adhered to her custom of spending her Christmas holidays among her own people at Rosamel Park.

We got up “The Honeymoon,” to enable young Lord Hebberton, one of the defeated candidates for the dukedom of Wigmore, to exhibit his accomplishments as the Duke of the stage; and the “School for Scandal,” as containing four full-dressed female parts; — women being instinctively aware, on

these occasions, that plumes and petticoats constitute the major share of their dramatic importance.

In this favourite comedy, moreover, to which fashion has always imparted the *cachet* of *bon ton*, even the dear duchess consented to appear; intending, I suspect, that the part of Lady Teazle, or perhaps the girlish Maria, should be offered for her acceptance. But after committing herself by a promise to act, she found, alas! that the plums had been picked out of the cake, and that she had only to choose between Mrs. Candour and Lady Sneerwell; — just as Lord Horsham and Charley Marston, who had intended to be irresistible in Charles Surface and Joseph, were forced to hide their diminished heads in Sir Oliver and Mr. Snake!

It vexed me to see the Duchess of Wigmore forget herself so completely. So long as she remained on her throne, in spite of the ravages of time and the petty arts to which she had recourse to repair them, others beside the Trichstensteins and Hesse Rudenbergs were

consistent in citing her as a distinguished-looking woman ; and, in her proper place, she had the art of keeping such people as Lady Bingley and Mr. Roper at becoming distance. But the moment she allowed herself to be jostled in the throng,—to walk on the same level with the rest of the party,—to be summoned to rehearsal,—set right by the prompter or applauded by the spectator,—she became what she really was—an ugly, affected, unintelligent old woman, who pretended to be clever, pretty, and young ; and was of course laughed at for her pains !

I do not say this because she left me unnoticed in my basket while rehearsing, day after day, with Lord Hebberton and his fashionable friends. But I saw many a shoulder shrugged pityingly at her behind her back, by those whose flatteries to her face were absolutely nauseous ; and was not a little amused to perceive that, among other characteristics of the green room transferred to Wigmore Castle, were the strifes and envyings of the legitimate offspring of Thespis.

When Byron wrote about hating with

A hate known only on the stage,—

he need not have restricted the definition to its hirelings.

“It is really too delicious to see a woman of the dear duchess’s half a century of experience pretending to be timid!”—whispered Lady Surcingle, the Lady Teazle of the party,—whose eye would have looked down a squadron of Irish dragoons.

“A woman may be susceptible to *mauvaise honte*, though lost to all other sense of shame!” was the equally good-natured reply of Colonel Harborton, of the Guards, — to whom had been judiciously assigned in the play the part of Sir Benjamin Backbite.

“I know not if her *honte* be *mauvaise*; but I am sure her *acting* is bad enough,” added Lady Surcingle. “Our Lady Sneerwell shuts her eyes every time she opens her mouth; as if to exercise her two senses at a time, might endanger her losing them!”

“Some of her grace’s senses have been

missing for years!" retorted the colonel. "Unless with a speaking-trumpet, impossible to make her hear the cues!—In a lower condition of life, the dear duchess would be keeping a dame-school, in her own grey hair and spectacles!"

Ten minutes afterwards, when Lady Surcingle had stolen off to flirt with Lord Hebberton in the billiard-room, I heard the gallant colonel solemnly assure the duchess that, "since the days of Lady Derby, never had such an actress of genteel comedy as herself, appeared on the boards; and that to the mellifluous intonation of Mrs. Jordan, she united the grace of Lady Harrington, the pure declamation of Lady Becher, and the stage effect of all the Kembles put together!"—

And this man wore a sword; and would have turned away his valet for lying, had he told him at two o'clock that it was one! But *les fourberies de Scapin* are a very different thing from the *fourberies* of Scapin's master!

That in the captain is a venial fault,
Which in the soldier is the Mill for life!

The only person in the house, the noiseless tenor of whose way was undisturbed by the uproar of the theatricals, was the Duke of Wigmore; to whose nightly doze it made little difference whether his guests were absorbed in whist, or engaged, three rooms off, in proving that they were still awkwarder and stupider when they fancied they were acting, than when they fancied they were natural!—He was only waiting the end of the month to balance his head-keeper's account, and inscribe it in the Wigmore game-book, verified by his own "hairy stockoratical" autograph, ere he took his departure for town, for the opening of the French play; and was thankful that, in the interim, the duchess had found a new toy to amuse her, and secure him against those little conjugal recriminations, in which, when other entertainment was wanting, thanks to the malicious intelligence of Lewson, her grace was apt to indulge.

The duke was more patient with it, in short, than *I* was!—The undignified bustle of the

house offended *my* nicety of feeling.—And I had no sympathizing ear into which to pour my discontent!—For poor Fido was grown even deafer than his mistress; and lay glum and unheeding on his cushion, as though all the solemnity which the flightiness of the moment had extracted from the religious festival of Christmas, was concentrated in his misanthropic face.

Matters were coming to a crisis.—The performers were up in their parts. A dress rehearsal had already taken place, to the great satisfaction of our human Monsieur Moustache and the ladies' maids.—The bows of the Wigmore band, which constituted our orchestra, were well resined; and the pullies of the green curtain, after much difficulty, were brought into play. Everything in the house was *sens dessous dessus*. Invitations had been issued to all the families in the neighbourhood for the following night, when the first representation was to take place;—and

The cry was still, “they come!”—

In spite of a deep snow, and degree of cold that made even mercury look blue, a tremendous audience was anticipated.

I can scarcely describe how deeply I blushed for my poor mistress, on beholding her bedizened by the hands of Lewson to appear on the stage.—The comedy was to be costumed as on its first representation, under the auspices of Sheridan; and a theatrical wig-maker had arrived from town, to preside over the powder-puff.—I cannot say but that the duchess looked remarkably well in her sea-green sacque, and high-heeled shoes; and flirted to admiration a fan presented to her by Count Jules de Messignac, to replace the one destroyed by my frantic jealousy of his horrible poodle. Rouged, patched, powdered, pomatumed, she reminded me in a manner most unsatisfactory, of a certain portrait of Madame de Pompadour, the meretricious graces of which, adorn the famous series of *femmes célèbres*—such celebrity as it is!

Her grace's dressing-room was lighted with unwonted brilliancy for the completion

of this critical toilet ; and Lewson had been more than usually cross, and the duchess more than usually loud and imperative, under the excitement and difficulties of the case.—When lo ! as I lay philosophically taking mine ease in my basket, watching my mistress rehearse before the great swing-glass, the curtsy which she evidently premeditated to acknowledge the final plaudits of the audience, methought I saw her stagger.—Natural enough ! for she was not accustomed to the high-heeled shoes on which she was mounted.—Unluckily, Lewson was occupied at the moment in giving charge to the chambermaid to “besure and look to the lights, as *she* was to be in waiting upon her grace behind the scenes ;” and as powers of speech were not vouchsafed me to exclaim in the theatrical language becoming the occasion, —“ Look to the lady !”—a heavy fall upon the floor was the only intimation to the waiting-woman that anything was amiss.

The first impulse of such of the feminine gender as are present on similar occasions, is always to scream ;—and scream they did,—

both first and second *cameriera*, with a shrillness that might have rent asunder even one of the Duke of Wigmore's leaden dozes.—But the house was full of unwonted noises.—When people laughed, it passed for a stage-laugh, and attracted no attention; and now that they screamed, it passed for a stage scream, and was equally disregarded.

The duchess, however, neither screamed nor spoke. She was probably seriously injured by her heavy fall. For even when Lewson and her companion endeavoured to raise her, she uttered not a syllable.—Nay, when rushing from my basket, I hastened with anxious sympathy to lick the hand of my poor mistress, she took no manner of notice.—Her hand was clenched, indeed, as if in pain.—But after some moments,—after Lewson had pulled down the bell-ropes by ringing for assistance, and, in defiance of costume, rouge, or powder, dashed water into the face of her unconscious lady,—I felt the nerves relax and the fingers unclose. No motion,—no breath,—no life in that prostrate form!—With instinc-

tive horror, I stole into the furthest corner of the chamber ;—for I found that I had been caressing a corpse !

Assistance was soon procured—and even medical assistance ; for the family apothecary was fortunately in the house. So overpowering, however, to the feelings of all present was the suddenness of the case, that Hummington could scarcely trust the steadiness of his hand to bleed his patient ; and when he did, no blood followed the incision of his lancet.

The word “accident” having instantly circulated through the castle, an express was sent off by Hilgrove for further advice, without consulting the duke ; so that almost as soon as the poor bewildered Hummington began to discover that the duchess, instead of being stunned by a fall, had fallen only because overwhelmed by a fit of apoplexy, the physician from the neighbouring town made his appearance to announce that he was come too late,—that the pulse had ceased to beat,—that all was over !—

No one would believe it. The attendants

kept wildly entreating that something might be done ;—and when Lewson was gravely desired by the medical men to undress the body of her lady, she fell into a fit of hysterics, and had to be removed from the room. The dressing lights were still burning,—the carriages of the guests were still arriving,—the stage was still illuminated for the evening's representation, when the corpse was laid upon the bed, and a solemn intimation made to the house that Lady Sneerwell had quitted this mortal stage, and that the Duchess of Wigmore was no more !

To those who had seen her only an hour before, presiding in the highest spirits at her dinner table, the event appeared so incredible, that I verily believe it occurred to more than one person in the house she had been unfairly dealt with. In the course of nature, the duchess had seemed likely to live for years.—Thanks to the arts by which her person was embellished, she appeared to be in the prime of life ; and though the truthfulness of a coffin plate was about to attest that she had entered her sixtieth year,

the date of her grace's birth had been so studiously withheld from the peerage-mongers, that the world, with implicit faith in her pink ribbons and Circassian dye, imagined her ten years younger.—It was only Lord Horsham and Charles Marston, who, though nearly her contemporaries, conceived themselves to be in the bloom of youth, who had ever regarded her as an old woman.

The consternation and confusion of that night at Wigmore Castle, never, never shall I forget!—The visitors staying in the house began to prepare, even at that late hour, for immediate departure;—while the temporary guests were sending in all directions to recall their carriages and horses. All was horror,—all was bewilderment!—The perplexity of the workmen, to whom there was no one to give orders or dismissal,—the anxiety of the medical attendants to convince the duke that they were blameless, and that every thing had been done,—and the shuddering desire of the panic struck duke to avoid hearing another syllable on the subject, need not be dwelt upon.

A message had been instantly despatched to Rosamel Park with the terrible tidings, to prepare the marchioness for receiving her bereaved father-in-law as her inmate till the funeral was over ; and as his grace, as well as the visitors in the house, were to take their departure at daybreak, there was scarcely an interval of quiet to impart due solemnity to the sad stillness of the chamber of death, in a corner of which I had from the first concealed myself,—resolved not to abandon, while above-ground, the remains of the woman who to me had been so fond a friend !

Next morning, I heard the carriages roll off in succession, bearing away first the still-as-tonished widower, and next, the long-visaged guests.—Some of whom were terrified,—a few grieved ;—but the greater number simply disappointed by this terrible interruption of their pastimes. When the last had departed, came my hour of trial. For the moment the house was abandoned to the discretion of the servants, all decency of respect towards the dead, was at an end.

The family apothecary, to whom, pending the arrival of the upholsterer from town to issue orders for the funeral, was entrusted the care of her grace's remains, was forced to proceed on his round of daily visits, leaving as his delegates the housekeeper and Hilgrove. For Lewson, still hysterical, was much too nervous for the discharge of her duties; and no sooner did the housekeeper discover that she was losing the respect of the under-servants for not losing her presence of mind and becoming hysterical also, than *she* too found it impossible to remain with the body.

The duke was absent, and the last man on earth to make retrospective inquiries. There were no afflicted children, no anxious friends, to investigate the proceedings of the household.—Even the undertaker would not arrive till the following day; and the affair ended with two wretched old women from the village accustomed to such fearful service, being called in to perform the last offices towards the dead!

Two nurses from the workhouse, admitted to

deal according to their own good pleasure with one who had scarcely esteemed the winds of heaven sufficiently exclusive to breathe upon her face!—Creatures of the commonest clay, accustomed only to the rough aspect and callous touch of the pauper, enabled to pry into the mysteries of that tawdry toilet,—to wash the paint from the face,—the patches from the brow,—and remove one by one the means and appliances which had converted unvenerable age into a vain mimicry of youth! By *them* what the world esteems ridiculous, was regarded as a crime.—And they had Scripture warrant for their abhorrence; the name of Jezebel being mingled in the prayers wherein the two aged crones besought heaven to have mercy on her sinful soul!—

Cowering in my recess, I watched their operations;—resolved, upon the least show of desecration, to spring upon them, and if unable to punish, at least to terrify them into forbearance. But the task became too painful to me. It was the first time I had ever looked face to face on death; and in what more fearful guise

alas ! could I have imbibed my first lesson concerning the fragility and helplessness of human nature !—Chilled to the marrow I lay me down moaning in my corner and wept !—

At length, all was accomplished. The woman, so proud,—so flighty,—so wild with wantonness of levity the preceding night,—lay extended in ghastly nothingness upon her white sheet ; in a simple nightdress,—old, shrunken, withered, degraded ;—abandoned by her friends,—neglected by her menials !—Such scenes, I have since learned, have often occurred at the death of sovereigns ; and even the *grand monarque* appears to have lain deserted on his mattrass, and been buried like a dog. But the poor dear duchess had watched too kindly over *her* dogs, for me to feel otherwise than heartbroken at her degradation.—I do not pretend to defend what she was to her husband, her friends, her servants. For *that* she was gone to render an account. But to Rattle, at least, she was a good mistress ; and Rattle watched faithfully beside the ashes of the dead.

All day, not a soul approached the chamber. Time enough for the inmates of the house to show deference to the corpse, when invested by undertakers with the pomp and circumstance of death.—But so long as there were no sable hangings, no liver sconces, no tall tapers, or emblazoned escutcheons to impart interest to the scene, it remained as solitary as Sahara.

As the day wore to an end, a terrified chambermaid inserted her head into the room, to inquire, in the housekeeper's name, of the two old creatures, whether they "wanted for anything?"—in reply to which, "candles, and a bit to eat," were mutteringly demanded.—

Trembling lest the girl should, on returning with their suppers and lights, pursue her search after myself, I ensconced myself, creepingly, under the bed of death, the contact of which curdled my very blood!—But I need not have alarmed myself! My poor mistress and I were both utterly forgotten!

I shall never forget the dreariness of that evening. Having spent four-and-twenty

hours without food, my heart was faint within me, and my tongue clave to my palate ;—and as the bitter gusts of a stormy January night beat against the lofty windows, of which the two old crones had not courage to close the gilded shutters or draw the velvet curtains, I could almost fancy I heard the voice of her who was gone, shrieking amid the howlings of the storm.

At last, the moon rose ; and a lurid light shone at intervals into the dimly-lighted chamber, as the clouds were driven to and fro by the roaring storm across its inauspicious disk :—and lo ! the tall tapers appeared to burn more dimly as that unearthly ray eclipsed their funereal glimmer.

There, when only a few hours before, jewels had sparkled and satins glistened, while the cheerful gleam and merry crackling of the fire united with joyous voices and nimble feet to vivify the fragrant atmosphere, all was now chill and silent ! Not a sound—not a foot-step !—The mouse that stole from the wain-

scot to sport on the rich carpet, was now more master of the place than SHE, the echoes of whose haughty voice had scarcely ceased to vibrate!—

As soon as the two women, overcome by the unusual luxuriousness of the meal, with which, with the appetite of ghouls, they had gorged themselves in the presence of death, dropped asleep in the easy chairs in which they had stationed themselves for their night watch, I stole from my hiding place, and surveyed with feelings impossible to describe the changes which the lapse of a single day had effected in that sacred chamber. What disarray was around me!—Every object hallowed by the daily touch of my poor mistress, already removed from its place!—Treasures, with which even Lewson was not allowed to meddle, thrust irreverently aside to make way for the jugs and glasses of two workhouse nurses!

Unfortunate, that a lesson so replete with instruction, should be reserved for the edification of a little dog! For even from myself, heart-broken and exhausted as I was, it

wrung moans of dismay. In my anguish of grief, I could no longer refrain from my usual place on the bed of my poor deserted mistress;—nor forbear insinuating myself under that terrible sheet, and licking her clay-cold hand!—It had fed and cherished me!—Enough for her human followers to be ungrateful!—

How long I lay there, I scarcely know; for I was overwhelmed in body and soul by a sense of my own friendlessness and the fate of my mistress.—But about midnight, the door of the silent chamber was gently opened,—*so* gently indeed as not to disturb from their slumbers the two untrustworthy watchers;—and lo! there glided a figure, in which, under the influence of that awful hour, I seemed to behold an angel!

But the white dress, the noiseless step, the heavenly face, were only those of Lady Rosamel; who, after installing the duke under her roof, had hastened to the Castle; shocked at the idea of leaving the remains of her husband's mother so disrespectfully abandoned.

In a moment she aroused the sleeping wo-

men ; and bidding them remove the fragments of their meal, and keep watch in the adjoining chamber, devoted herself to the post from which the upper servants had recoiled.

Scarcely was she alone with the dead, when sinking on her knees by the bedside, she humbly and fervently prayed for the mercy of God upon her it had been His pleasure to call so suddenly to her account !—

CHAPTER V.

She's dead !

The noise was high !—Ha ! no more moving ?

Still as the grave !—I think she stirs again ?

O insupportable,—O heavy hour !—

Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse

Of sun and moon.

SHAKSPEARE.

It afforded balm to my sorrows when the marchioness, on ceding at daybreak our charge to the housekeeper and upholsterers, and discovering me forlorn and shivering in my sad concealment, raised me for the first time in her arms, with the kindest epithets of endearment,—bestowing tears upon my fidelity, as she had bestowed her prayers on the dead.

That awful chamber, however, was no place for a thing of my species. By her, I submitted to be borne away; and when, on hastening back to Rosamel to discharge her duties towards the living, she assigned me a place in the carriage, I almost flattered myself she had conceived an esteem for me, and that I was about to become her inmate for life. The more so, that the duke entreated her to take charge of me. "He could neither bear to see me again," he said, "nor to fancy that I had fallen into careless hands."

But such happiness was not to be my portion; nor, at the close of the month that followed the pompous interment of the poor dear duchess, did I continue to regard it as altogether the *summum bonum* of earthly felicity. I saw that, with that charming woman, I could never become a first object. I had not only her four beautiful children for rivals, but all the duties of her valuable life. Her notice of me arose only from compassion, and I was likely to feel myself as forlorn at Rosamel Park, as when guarding the remains of my late mistress.

Had she been really fond of me—could I have fancied that, once or twice in the course of the day, her mild blue eyes rested upon me with predilection, I would have resigned myself to expend my life in hearing Watts's hymns recited in the nursery, and the Accidence, or History of England, in the school-room. But the moment I discovered myself to be no more in her estimation than the alabaster greyhound that held her pen on her writing-table, I began also to discover that Rosamel Park, sobered beyond even its habitual sobriety by family mourning, was dull as a *béguinage*. It is not pleasant to find oneself accounted nobody.—Ask the Tories omitted by Sir Robert Peel in the formation of his administration.—Ask the authors whom the Quarterly forgets to review!

I, whose little caprices had been consulted like those of a spoiled child,—I, who had been allowed to make a noise when merry, in spite of people's headaches and heartaches,—and express my personal likings and dislikings as freely as a crowned head,—found myself under

the necessity of holding my bark at Rosamel Park, if I entertained the least hope of holding my own. And so far from being petted in requital of my sacrifices, in spite of all, the old terrier remained dog of the walk.

One day, some months after my domestication in that happy abode of which I was growing as weary as Rasselas of his valley, I overheard sad complaints made by the nursery governess to the marchioness, that Lady Helen had stuck fast in her a, b, ab, because "her ladyship's attention was always taken up with Rattle." When present, she could not refrain from playing with me,—when absent, from inquiring my whereabouts. She bid fair, in short, to be a worthy granddaughter to the Duchess of Wigmore, of lap-dog-loving memory.

"We need not be uneasy,—the evil will soon be at an end!" was the mild rejoinder of the marchioness. "Lady Ulva is to take Rattle with her when she goes abroad, and I am only keeping the poor little thing till after her marriage."

The St. Petersburg banker, who, when mistaken for a fellow-dog of mine, found himself under sudden sentence of impalement, could not have felt more astonished than I, on finding my destinies thus unceremoniously disposed of!

Who in the world was Lady Ulva?—The name was borne by the eldest son of the Duke of Normanford, who was residing in Italy, in bad health.—But to whom was he about to give his hand?—Impossible for dog to be more ignorant than I was becoming, concerning the sayings and doings of the great world.—Since my arrival at Rosamel Park, not the smallest crumb of scandal had been my portion!—Colloquies with the head nurse or governess, touching the health, moral or physical, of her children, supplied in Lady Rosamel's establishment the gossip I used to hear exchanged between the poor dear duchess and Lewson; and I was now much better up in Peter Parley, Mrs. Trimmer, and the Eton Grammar, than in what was done at Crockford's, or left *undone* by "both their Houses."

Half an hour's conversation with a dining-out man of Roper's description, was sadly necessary to brush up my acquaintance with the memorabilia of fashion.

As to finding out the name of Lord Ulva's bride from the chit chat of my gentle lady, I might as well have looked for it in the rubric!—Lady Rosamel was ignorant as a child both who was *who*, and who was *whose*.—Not a copy of the peerage in the house,—except an old smoke-dried thing on the book-shelf of one of the spare bedrooms; on the title page of which figured, as reigning Majesty, George II., looking exceedingly like Drugget in the farce of the Citizen.—As to the *Almanach de Saxe Gotha*, the uncourtly marchioness would just as soon have consulted the pages of the Racing Calendar!—

For the ensuing four-and-twenty hours, therefore, I sat fretting and fuming in a flowery nook I had appropriated to myself, unsuspected by the children, among the dwarf bosquets of the lawn;—surmising whether my new lady were sinner or saint,—an angel of

this world or an angel of the next,—one who had accepted me as a deposit, or sued for me as a delight!—At scarcely eighteen months of age, it was hard indeed to be thus chased from house to house, a football for the caprices of fortune;—and in a momentary fit of hypochondriacism, I almost wished myself lying beside my father Fido; for whose grave the snow had been scraped away, only a few days previous to the sudden death of the Duchess of Wigmore.

But the fire of youth was happily ardent in my veins.—A creature

Form'd in the very poetry of nature,

like my favoured self,—does not easily resign itself to despondency. I rallied my spirits by reflecting that, bright as had been my destinies, still brighter might be in store!—I *had been* the inmate of a castle;—but there were such things as palaces in the world. I *had been* the darling of a duchess;—but I might live to captivate a queen!—My for-

tunes were not fully accomplished.—The pyramid had yet an apex !

Methinks I perceive a solemn prig or two among my readers, screwing up their lips to remind me of the danger of ambition,—that “by that sin fell the angels.”—I know it ! The quotation is as stale as superfluous.—Moreover that which is a sin in angels, may be a virtue in lap-dogs. Even on four legs, on *ne désire pas rester conscrit* ; and the spirit of my noble ancestors stirring within me, assured me that I was born for distinction ;—that, in compliment to my exceeding littleness, greatness would, sooner or later, be thrust upon me !—Such *very* sad dogs have been promoted at court,—such *very* dirty dogs in political life !—And surely *my* ears were long enough to pretend to the highest dignities of the state !

Anty noo, dear reader, (as Mrs. Lewson used to phrase it,) the notion of foreign travel was far from unwelcome. — Though at the time Moustache was crushing me into extinction by the display of his accomplishments,

I took refuge from my mortification, like the Earl of Abergavenny in the play, by protesting myself to be a plain John Bull, and condemning the notions of English courtiers performing *Ko Too* at the Louvre, I was dying to go abroad for the delight of giving myself travelled airs on my return.—Like the great ladies whom the Quarterly declares to be far greater ladies after giving birth to “a little ladylike book of travels,”—I was smitten with a passion for appearing in print. For an album stocked with cobalt-blue Swiss landscapes, and sallow Roman ruins marvellously resembling a Stilton cheese,—models of a gondola serving for a pen-tray, and a *châlet* that might be easily mistaken for a mouse-trap,—an inkstand of carved *reh-horn* or *Wiener währung*,—a coral amulet,—a Pera portfolio,—and a shell-fisherman from Alkmaar,—scattered among the toys of Sèvres, Chelsea, or Dresden, in a lady’s boudoir, are apt to assign her, in my eyes, something of the charm of a Corinne!

It is true these things are becoming *banal*;

and that no one pretends now-a-days to diletanteism, who has not groped in an Etrurian tomb, or gone further and fared worse by crossing the Red Sea, to visit the caves of Salsette; or the Atlantic, on a pilgrimage to the antiquities of Mexico. But my pretensions were neither artistic nor scientific. I wanted to see the Faubourg St. Germain.—I wanted to visit the *Hochfürstliche* circles of Vienna.—I longed to find myself crouching at the foot of a monsignore, or licking the pope's toe.

Thou, (*human*) nature, art my goddess!

and I was sick of seeing thee perpetually attired in Stultz's coats, or Mrs. Murray's gowns. I wanted variety.—I yearned after Tuscany.—I longed for Medicean precincts. It seemed impossible but that *some* consanguineous trace must await me in the land of my ancestors.

But all this was mere speculation; and to trouble the public with my surmises, is as impertinent as the presumption of the daily journalists in cramming us, in place of news,

with half-a-dozen columns of the insignificant trash they call great letters;—one pennyworth of “I know,” to a monstrous quantity of “I think;”—an ounce of grain to whole bushels of chaff.

But my misgivings were soon to be cleared up.—I perceived an unusual stir in the house.—Company was expected.—The stoves were glowing; and the cheeks of the happy children glowed like the stoves. For the expected guests were dear to *them* as to their mother. It was only a family party that ever assembled at Rosamel Park; and though the Easter holidays were just then filling with brilliant circles half the country houses in the kingdom, *ours* consisted only of Lady Elizabeth Vernon and her son, and the Marquis and Marchioness of Ulva.

Yes—the Marquis and Marchioness of Ulva; and the public will, I trust, give me credit for bounding with the grace and agility of Carlotta Grisi into the hall, the moment I heard the announcement of their names.—A young

prince rushing to catch a glimpse of the princess to whom he has been wedded by proxy, can scarcely feel more impatient!—

Dear public,—I scorn to keep you in suspense.—The Marquis and Marchioness of Ulva were no other than Lord Algernon Howarth and Lady Jane Barnsford; a fact which, if half so intelligent a public as you are described by the addresses of every general election, or by Ludgate-hill linendrapers when announced by placard to be selling off at an immense loss, you probably foresaw more distinctly than your humble servant.

The death of the Duke of Normanford's eldest son had been too nearly simultaneous with that of the poor Duchess of Wigmore, to excite much interest at the castle; and Lord and Lady Wormington had frowned so severely on the suit of the ruined Algy Howarth, as to feel anxious that no extraordinary publicity should attend their recantation, and eager bestowal of their daughter upon the new Marquis of Ulva.

All this was nothing to *me*.—I was too hap-

py to trouble my head about the inconsistencies of the family. I had been claimed by dear Lady Jane on the death of her aunt, almost as a rightful inheritance; and welcomed her to Rosamel by jumping into her lap, and bestowing upon her caresses of so ardent a nature, that I almost wonder the bridegroom was not a little jealous.

Still more, however, do I wonder, that I recognized either of them; so marvellous a change had the last three months effected in both.—Lady Ulva, in whose heart security of happiness had favoured the expansion of every better feeling, as in an undisturbed atmosphere the foliage of the sensitive plant attains its full luxuriance, had become a thinking, feeling woman, instead of a whining sentimental girl; while in Lord Algernon, there scarcely remained a trace of the effeminate fop of the Athol. Perhaps, because his frills and embroidered handkerchiefs had at length accomplished their fatal purpose,—perhaps, because his former exaggerated dandyism was offensive to his bride; but more likely

still, because a recent sojourn in Paris had convinced him that the finery palmed upon him by London shopkeepers as Parisian, was the refuse of the Rue Vivienne, invented for foreign markets and incompatible with the *air distingué d'un homme comme il faut*.—He was now, therefore, as plain as his wife was pretty.

Both wore the deepest mourning,—the bride for my poor duchess, the bridegroom for his brother; and I soon discovered from their conversation with Lady Rosamel, that the purport of their continental journey was less the indulgence of a bridal excursion, than to visit the death and burial-place of the late Marquis of Ulva, to recompense those who had attended on his last moments, and erect a tomb to his memory.

A melancholy purpose, at such a moment! But the warm friendship existing between the bride and Lady Ellen Howarth, rendered her, independent of conjugal devotedness, eager to gratify the wishes of the Normanford family; and the young couple had experienced too

much annoyance in their recent separation to postpone their marriage that Lord Ulva might proceed alone to the discharge of his afflicting duty.

Versed as I was in the family secrets, it was impossible not to perceive the feelings of envy with which Lady Elizabeth Vernon contemplated the happy union of the young couple, or the satisfaction with which it was viewed by her son.

In spite of his habitual gravity, Mr. Vernon (who was on his way back to town, after spending the Easter recess with his mother at Vernon manor) was the only one of the party who indulged in the hilarity becoming the occasion.—Sincerely attached to his cousin, it was a relief to him to find their former friendship re-cemented by the cessation of his jealous fears—Nay, on witnessing Lord Ulva's devotion to the lovely bride so long the object of his attachment, he could not help wondering how he had ever apprehended mischief from the mere gallantry of his deportment towards the unfortunate Mary.

I fancied, indeed, that he was about to admit as much, when, one day after dinner as they were left *tête-à-tête* over their wine, and I jumped on the tablecloth to receive my usual dole of almonds from Lord Ulva, Vernon, who had been lost in a deep reverie, suddenly exclaimed—"What a strange likeness there is between Lady Rosamel's pet and a dog you were once good-natured enough to procure for Mrs. Vernon!"—

"And which *she* was *ill*-natured enough to return to me!"—added the marquis, with a smile. "I was thinking so yesterday, and should not be surprised that they proved to be one and the same.—Scarcely a thoroughbred King Charles but passes, once or twice in the course of the year, through the hands of the dog-stealers.—The man from whom I purchased Mrs. Vernon's, was a notorious vagabond,—a *protégé* of a German rascal who then served me as valet; and *this* little creature, which belonged to the poor Duchess of Wigmore, is very likely to have been obtained by *her* from some fellow of that description."—

“ You gave the dog to your valet, then, on finding that Mary was not—did not,”—it was difficult to express civilly—“ did not choose to accept your present.”—

“ By Jove, I scarcely remember what I did with it !” cried Lord Ulva, relieving him from his embarrassment by placing a dot over the *i*. “ In a fit of pique at finding my offering rejected, I probably got rid of it in the most expeditious manner. But whether I gave it to Ernest,—Roper,—or one of the waiters, has escaped my memory.”

“ The classification is flattering to Roper !” replied Vernon, with an involuntary smile.

“ It would be carrying coals to Newcastle, to flatter one who spends his life in flattering others,” retorted Lord Ulva. “ However, I am just now in especial charity with Roper ;—his uncle, the old general, having consented to remain with my father at Normanford, while Jane and I proceed on our Italian tour.”—

“ I am glad to hear the duke is not to be left alone,” replied Vernon, gravely.—“ His

health has been long precarious, and must have been grievously shaken by your poor brother's death. After the frightful suddenness of the event at Wigmore Castle, I shall never feel happy to leave my mother alone again!"

"And why the deuce *do* you leave her alone?" cried Lord Ulva. "Why not make Lady Elizabeth go to town, like other people? She must be so lonely at that old rat-trap of a manor, at this time of year!"—

"Many women prefer the country," said Vernon, gravely:—"as witness our fair hostess."—

"Lady Rosamel has children to keep her company. Lady Elizabeth's graceless child scarcely devotes to her a fortnight in the year!"—

"Has she been complaining of it to you or Lady Ulva?"—inquired Vernon,—a sudden flush overspreading his handsome face.

"You ought to know her better!—Were you to thumbscrew your mother, my dear Vernon, she would not only keep your secret by preserving a smiling countenance,

but persist in proclaiming you to the world the most dutiful of sons!"—

"And so I am!"—was the fervent response of his companion.

"As far as doing justice to Lady Elizabeth's merits, perhaps;—and what man in England would *not*?—But I suspect she will go to her grave without the accomplishment of her daily prayer of living to see you happily married and settled at Vernon Manor!"—

At this direct attack, Vernon looked exceedingly displeased. And well he might. As I took the last almond in the dish from the hand of Lord Ulva, I could not help agreeing with his cousin that *his* unalloyed domestic felicity did not entitle him to molest by such home-truths the susceptibility of his less fortunate friend.

Perhaps it was this random remark that hastened Vernon's departure from Rosamel Park. Perhaps he entertained the same suspicion which I did, that his mother and the Ulvas entertained a project for uniting him with the angelic Emily. For next day,

he pleaded letters from town recalling him to his duties; though decidedly none had reached him through the medium of the post-bag.

Had he asked *my* advice, I should have said without hesitation—"don't go." For, like Sir Peter Teazle, he left his character behind him; and if Lord Ulva did not actually betray to Lady Elizabeth the secret of her son's *liaison*, he made so many indiscreet allusions to the nature of Vernon's London engagements, that any woman less pure of nature, must have surmised the truth.

The tone in which Lady Elizabeth kept repeating that "George had promised to speak on the Factory Bill on the 24th; and that she was very wrong to have forgotten it!"—satisfied *me*, however, that for the present her confidence in her son was unimpaired.

During the visit of the Ulvas to Rosamel, the soft-hearted Jane insisted on paying a visit to Wigmore Castle, which was at little more than three hours' distance; partly out of respect to the memory of an aunt who had been so indulgent to her; partly out of gra-

titude to the spot where her eyes had been opened to the strength and value of her husband's persevering attachment. The noble owner (whom the Morning Post persisted in pathetically describing as "the bereaved duke,") being at Newmarket, there was no drawback on the comfort of the visit.

I was sadly afraid I should not be permitted to accompany them. But the marchioness, whose feelings Lady Rosamel had kindly interested in my favour by her account of my fidelity to the remains of her whom all others had deserted, insisted on my being the companion of her expedition.

"It will be a test of Rattle's sagacity," said she to her loving lord; "to see whether he remembers his old haunts."

And thanks to a certain eloquence of pantomimic gesture, which I take to be secondary in Europe only to that of Fanny Elslar, I trust I did myself justice in the eyes of my new master.

My eventual parting from the beloved inmates of Rosamel Park, was scarcely less

emphatic. For I bore no malice against its charming mistress for my dismissal. My bed had not been a bed of roses.—To be the favourite dog of one who has still greater favourites in four lively children, is as critical a position as to be the Tory minister of a sovereign whose predilections are bespoken by the Whigs.

But all dilemmas of this description were at an end.—I had the honour to be attached to a household of which both master and mistress possessed my esteem; and though strawberry leaves were for the present withdrawn from my escutcheon, I saw them in perspective; and would have given worlds had there been a peerage to consult, touching the exact age of the Duke of Normanford.

Meanwhile, Europe lay before me,—as it lies before those who are in the enjoyment of a good credit on Rothschild,—a strong travelling-carriage of Leader's,—and a complication of patent leather boxes of such curious varieties of angularity, as though the trunk-maker has been working a problem.

After a few days at the Athol, (to increase our collection by a few more leathern inconveniences, including a first-rate courier,) away we went, at the rate and in the style in which well-thinking people used to turn their backs on their country, before railroads had converted Great Britain into the semblance of a gigantic implement for the torture of St. Lawrence.

What pompous things were journeys in those days!—What a multitude of human beings, administered to one's comfort, when one "took the road!"—What bowing, bobbing, scraping and tugging of the forelock!—What bills of the Crown,—what an overflow at the Fountain,—What a dash over Barham Down!—And if pleasant even to those accountable to postmasters and extortionable by hotels, how much more to the luxurious little dog taking no heed of the morrow, couched in his lady's silken lap, and certain to be catered for by the finical fastidiousness of his lady's maid!—

And now, dear public, you are about to

make acquaintance with your Rattle in the character of an Idler in France and Idler in Italy ; or rather as a busy-body in both.—Having instantaneously imbibed the scribblo-mania contagious from the deck of every steam-packet, I determined at once to write my travels. Though ignorant of the languages of the countries I intended to describe, no one can tax me with the common fault of fashionable tourists—of being ignorant of my own.—For the vocalization of my bark is admitted to be perfect as that of the voice of Persiani; and as to French and Italian, it was easy to catch the accent, as the Irishman did his English, by travelling with my tongue out.—By mincing up small the information of guide books, and sprinkling my text with the visiting cards left upon my lord and lady, I had little doubt of producing three charming octavos, as full of “ dear delightful dukes, and Duchesses Oropezo di Villa Santa Gimmo-cracchiano,” as the most fashionable publisher could desire. If matter were wanting, hotel-bills and bills of fare can always be introduced

in an appendix; or the catalogues of public galleries patched here and there into the work, like bits of marble in scagliola;—if sufficiently ill-translated to be unrecognizable by more erudite readers.

The only difficulty I experienced was in bringing on a spasm of enthusiasm, in traversing ground so footworn. For a book of travels, of which the writer does not appear to be in a state of effervescence, is considered flat as a bottle of soda-water that will not pop; *et si le bouchon ne saute pas*, the writer *does*!—Any appearance of languid circulation is sure to produce a languid circulation in return.

A clever man, like Marryat, may write a work called the “Journal of a *Blasé*,”—or a clever woman, like Mrs. Jameson, the “Diary of an *Ennuyée*.”—But the “Excursions of a Bored Dog” would scarcely pay their expenses; even if stuffed with lithographs, and boasting, by way of frontispiece, like other literary catchpennies, a sketch of the author by Edwin Landseer. I had half a mind, indeed, to call my peregrinations a “transla-

tion from the Swedish,"—a certain passport to favour with the London world; or, like the "Amber Witch," to commence with Chapter VII.—as though the onset were too terrible for print. The opening chapters of a book of travels, indeed, might usually be omitted with advantage; as containing the author's few last words with his friends at home, and the list of his shirts and patent medicines; and after Boz, even a chapter on sea-sickness were a nauseous pleonasm.

I am credibly assured, by the way, that overland-mail portmanteaus of the present year may be had, furnished with three volumes ready ruled and primed for journalizing; a trifle extra being charged for such as are divided into chapters, with appropriate mottos and meditations. But I beg my public to believe that *my* hairy-stockoratical lucubrations are written upon Houghton's superfine Bath post, in defiance of all rule; and distinguished from vulgar authorship by the embossed coronet of my mistress.

Now that I have become decidedly blue

however, I must cease to talk in plain terms of my master and mistress; but describe them, like other Idlers, as “the dear marchioness, radiant in health and beauty; and the marquis, looking, as he always does, more *distingué* than any one else,—the perfect *beau idéal* of a nobleman!”—like Puss in boots, demanding public homage to the splendaciousness of the Marquis de Carabas.

And since I AM talking of them, whether in Monsieur Jourdain’s prose, or that of the Countess Lavinia Ramsbottom, I must be permitted to observe that, cheering as it was to my heart to witness the happiness of Lady Jane, after seeing her run so perilous a risk of falling the victim of worldly counselors and the sentimentality arising from idle hours and a superficial education, I was beginning to look forward with some uneasiness to a life spent in contemplation of such *very* felicitous connubial felicity; or to speak it Idler-wise, “at the ineffable bliss of the dear and interesting marchioness, and her handsome, gallant, and *spirituel preux chevalier* of a lord!”

In his famous doctrinal work, entitled, „Christologic des alten Testaments,“ the learned Hengstenberg accuses mankind of inaptitude to conceive the immeasurability of eternal happiness. “The very idea,” says he, “is crushing to the human mind. Nay, a feeling of weariness,—a dread of monotony,—is connected with it by their narrow and imperfect conceptions.”

Just so did my finite capacity anticipate the perpetual honeymoon of the young couple to whom I was attached for the remainder of my days! Apprehensive that they were about to stock the *buffet* of life exclusively with milk and honey, or milk and water, I was sadly afraid we should have no more cakes and ale!

But in this surmise the little dog was mistaken. My circumscribed knowledge of the world alone blinded me to the fact that *every* year has its spring-tide blossoms,—its primroses and violets,—though fated, alas! like honeymoons, to subside into a foggy November at last.

I had nothing to fear;—albeit the loving pair were still so all in all to each other, receding from public view, and despising the tinsel and glitter of the fashionable world, that, when we approached Paris, (a paradise of modern epicureans, which causes most people to lament that during their sojourn, their five senses cannot be multiplied by two,) I was horror-struck to hear “the dear and lovely marchioness” propose that we should dash through it at a gallop,—pausing only to change horses!—

What want of feeling,—what want of energy,—what insensibility to the higher attributes of civilization!—Why even I, Rattle, trembled with excitement when I beheld afar off the *Arche de Triomphe*, which

Lumbering in the skies,
Like a tall bully lifts its head and lies,—

predominating over the elms and guinguettes of the Avenue de Neuilly!—The heart of a mighty nation was throbbing before me—(ahem!)—and (why should I deny it) it would

have gone to my heart to pass unexamined and uncriticised the breeding-place of Moustache!—The capital which gives birth to such *very* dressy counts and *very* polite dogs, deserves the conscientious notice of the tourist.

When my master's will prevailed over my mistress's pleasure, therefore, and it was settled that we should change our minds instead of our horses, I prepared myself, on entering the metropolis which, from the days of the Emperor Julian to those of the Emperor Jullien, has so firmly contended with our own for the epithet of "GREAT,"—I prepared myself, I say, to experience a sensation;—called for green tea, mended my pen, and drew forth my Johnson's dictionary. It took me ten minutes' deliberation on my cushion, to decide whether I would treat matters didactically, *à la Guizot*,—or Jules Janinously,—*à la* forked lightning.

But after all this pretence at self-possession, the effect really produced on me by the French capital, was just such as I saw produced on

Lady Rosamel's famous terrier by the sight of a hedgehog. I surveyed it first with wonder,—next with rage,—and lastly, with terror. Any attempt to tear it to pieces was out of the question. I was as thoroughly overpowered as any other dog but one of St. Bernard, by the sight of Mont Blanc!

The volcanic vitality of a city like Paris, with its fiery complexity of human machinery, is to me awful as the crushing force of a railroad.—A single pebble under the wheels, and thousands of human beings are blown into the air! Peter the Great is known to have exclaimed, on beholding the French capital,—“Were I king of France, I would *burn* Paris!”—such a city being a despot more despotic than the throne!

Burning, however, is a Muscovite expedient, as Moscow can attest. Louis Philippe has hit on a milder method of subjection, by fettering it down with fortifications,—like the Man mountain in Lilliputian bondage. Paris fortified, will be almost as much Paris conquered, as Paris burnt!

London, as far as square inches are concerned, is, doubtless, a much greater Great Metropolis. But what is there in its length, breadth, and thickness, compared with the veins of mercury that vivify the latter city! London resembles a stranded whale,—huge, powerful, but too cumbrous for action,—and afraid of stirring, lest it should be cut up for the sake of its bones and spermaceti. But Paris is like the lion of the desert, which compels the beholder to close his eyes with terror, whenever it makes a spring;—so certain are we that, on again beholding it, gore will be dripping from its fangs, and human flesh quivering under its fearful talons.

And now, having said something grand and quotable to catch the eye of the purblind old Spectator, the next duty of the Idler is to describe the silken hangings and gay carpets of the hotel where we lodged; and the charming basket, or *niche*, with which “the following morning I was surprised by Lord U.”—one of those exquisite *bijoux* which the imagination of

Susse or Giroux is alone capable of devising for the use of a still greater *bijou* ;—ebony relieved with ivory, delicately encrusted with mother of pearl and *vermeil* mouldings;—the castors being concealed within the bodies of tortoises carved in the natural shell of those venerable *amphibia*, whose exquisitely chiselled heads appeared to vibrate as it moved!—The cushions and curtains were of the palest blue silk, richly fringed with silver. It was, in short, the kind of fanciful and meretricious habitation usually provided for dogs of my description.

The chicken served daily at my table by order of the dear considerate marchioness, was one day dressed *à la poulette*, the next *à la Tartare*, like the alternation of leading articles in a popular journal; and “one day, as my new and amiable friend Field Marshal the Duke of X., was calling upon us while I was partaking of my humble meal, happening to meet the Countess of L., whose great grandfather was ambassador at Naples in the reign of the unfortunate Louis XVI., accompanied by her

charming sister in law the Vicomtesse de B., whose beautiful estates adjoin Ermenonville, the celebrated retreat of the Girardins, where, as the literary reader is aware, Voltaire spent the latter years of his life in philosophical retirement, and now sleeps in the Isle of Poplars (peace to the manes of the incomparable creator of *Candide*, *Julie*, and *St. Preux*!)—he observed to Lord U. on seeing me busy with my simple repast,—‘ Ah ! my dear friend, what has become of the *noblesse de l’ancien régime* ! ’ ”

I do not know exactly what he meant. But I suppose he meant something. At all events, the anecdote is worth recording ; for a page full of proper names, particularly if noble, is as piquant in a book of Idlerism, as the sweetmeats in a cabinet pudding.

I had some thoughts indeed of perfecting the impression of my fashionability by inserting here an extract from Barenne’s bills, or the sketch of a morning at Palmyre’s ; such as might save my Public a month’s subscription

to the *Petit Courrier des Dames*.—But so many worlds of fashion are revolving, now a days, that I am afraid of being anticipated; and the *eau sucrée* school of literature is said to be *en vacances*. My dear and accomplished marchioness, moreover, being a great lady rather than a fine lady, was much too well-bred to be addicted to fine clothes.

Qualified, however, as I am dear Public, to give my opinion on all subjects, from a marabout feather to a *garde des sceaux*, you must accept, instead of my milliner's bills, my verdict on the character and understanding of a few of the great men of the day; and believe on my showing, that, so far from embracing the axiom of *se faire riche sans se faire pendre*, Monsieur Thiers is one of the most highminded of mankind, and "not the least eccentric;" and truly do I rejoice that the disfavour of this active little man with that active great man his sovereign, should have afforded him time for the study of history, and enabled him to put forth his voluminous works with as

much facility as a hippopotamus its unwieldy young. When in London indeed, and about to have his audience of the Whig minister, Monsieur Thiers asked for the respite of "*un petit quart d'heure*, to study the international laws of England and France;" at which rate, he probably bestowed a week on the preliminaries of *Le Consulat et l'Empire*.

Let me here relate, with Idler-like mystery of insinuation, how one of the greatest men in France, — —, asserted before me the other day, that Thiers and Guizot were likely to end as they began,—“the one a *gamin*, the other a pedant!”

No qualifying initials, however, need be put in requisition to attest the opinions emitted by high and low, concerning the reigning family of France. No *arrière pensée* concerning *them*! Not a resident in Paris, of whatever party or degree, but admits the wife and family of Louis Philippe to be a fortunate accident in the career of kings. Bountiful and gracious as Providence, they are scarcely less fervently beset

with benedictions. I *may* be believed. In *this* I do not speak Idler-wise, or Roper-wise; but on the faith of a conscientious little dog.—

The words I utter

Let none think flattery, for they'll find them truth.

A pattern are they to all princes living,

And all who shall succeed. Saba was never

More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue.

Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel them;

They are both lov'd and fear'd; and those about them

From them derive the perfect ways of honour

Whereby they claim their greatness—not by blood!

CHAPTER VI.

When the thing
You dread, comes near, and you can measure it,
Then ruffle up your courage, till it stands
Between you and your danger, like a champion.

DRAMATIC FRAGMENTS.

Gourmand, yvrogne, et assurementeur,
Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphémateur !

CLEMENT MAROT.

ALL who ever wrote about Paris, dear public, from Lawrence Sterne to Jules Janin, have told you that to abide in its buoyant atmosphere is like quaffing a perpetual draught of sparkling champagne ;—to which I add my assenting bow-wow.

It is true that, like champagne, the enjoyment is apt to leave headache and heartburn behind. But this is a small penalty for that delicious flavour and those effulgent bubbles. No need to bore you, however, by dwelling longer on a topic so exhausted.—To prose about Paris would be a crime as unnatural as to make a cage-bird of a “temple-haunting martlet.”

I retreat, therefore, into the *étui* of private life.—And a pleasant private life I led of it; —for the *suivante* I have described as occupying the place in the rumble beside Maurice the courier, was no other than Lucy Mason; the poor girl whose filial afflictions I described at some length to my readers, on the day of my *début* at Wigmore House.

At that time, she had little thought of taking service as an hireling!—But Lucy was now an orphan; and the nature of her claims against the dear duchess having brought her under the notice of her grace’s niece, she was thankful to accept such protection as the

home offered by the compassionate Lady Jane. Though qualified by superior education for the post of nursery governess, Miss Mason preferred to place herself in attendance on one whose amiable disposition afforded promise of ample compensation for the years of want and trouble through which she had struggled ;—and I suspect it counted for something with her to be enabled to turn her back upon a country, where her utmost labours had proved unable to procure the means of subsistence for the last hours of her mother.

Luckily, the courier engaged to be her *compagnon de voyage* was a steady middle-aged man, highly recommended to the marquis by his cousin Lord Hebberton.—Maurice, who had a wife and family residing at Bourdeaux, scarcely needed Lady Ulva's orders that the comfort of Miss Mason should be on all occasions studiously attended to ;—so different was he from the ranting, swearing, smoking, cheating foreign ruffians, usually officiating in his calling. Lord Ulva had no

reason indeed to regret having consented that a man of such decent manners and zealous intelligence should also officiate as his valet de chambre :—an arrangement contrary to the rule of the road, but obviating the quarrels sure to arise on a journey between the courier and valet,—who are either confederates, or *à couteaux tirés*.

Excuse my dwelling on the subject, impatient reader. But I wish to account to you for my inertness in taking upon trust the fabrications of guide-books touching the public monuments of Paris, rather than tear myself from a house which so many circumstances conspired to render comfortable.—It was really refreshing, as the Edinburgh Review would say, to watch the peace of mind of that long-suffering girl, in gradual process of restoration ;—her lank cheek resuming the hues of health, and her broken spirit its trust in the mercy of Providence and charities of her fellow-creatures.—The conciliating deportment of our young mistress did much. The quiet,

fatherly attentions of Maurice effected the rest.

The habits of Lucy being from early custom sedentary, and Maurice, whose life was so fatiguing, being glad to snatch every interval of rest, during the absence of Lord and Lady Ulva to dine at the Tuileries or Embassy or stun themselves with the trumpets and kettle-drums of the Académie Royale, we never quitted the hotel.—Lucy Mason sat engaged in the sempstresship of her calling ;—Maurice, as southrons are apt to do, was content to bask in the sun ;—while Rattle in Lucy's lap, enjoyed the same privilege.

Who but a blockhead would talk about leading people the life of a dog !—The life of a dog consists of sleeping away one half the twenty-four hours, and dozing, the other ;—and what wise man does not agree with the Gascon, who, when told that the Seine was a river that never left its bed,—replied, “ *voilà une rivière qui sait vivre* ”—“ The Seine knows what it is about !”

Most men love sleep as they love their wives,—they are ashamed to own how much! —Sancho Panza was the first philosopher who did public justice to his predilection in its favour.—Let Rattle be the first dog!

In my opinion, “Macedonia’s madman” never showed himself *more* wrongheaded than in his aversion to sleep, on pretence that “it reminded him of his mortality.”—So different are *my* views of its influence, that, had I the misfortune to have been born in Heathendom and out of range of the long shots of Exeter Hall, I much doubt whether by itself sleep would not have sufficed to apprise me of the immortality of the soul, by the inspiration of a *clairvoyance* “worth a thousand homilies!”

From the aspect of Sleep, the twin sister of Death, I should have become familiarized with that *seeming* extinction which has no terrors for the initiated; and from the detachment effected by its influence between the body and soul, have recognized their diverse nature.

As I lay dreaming in Lucy's lap, what worlds of superhuman happiness and splendour used to be unfolded to my wandering imagination! What immensity of space,—what gorgeousness of light,—what glories beyond all showing of this mortal sphere!—Alexander the Great can only have dreamed when he was awake; or he never would have immortalized his own incompetency by writing himself so muddy-minded.

On waking from my visions, it was scarcely less pleasant to find the sweet face of Lucy bending over me, like that of a guardian angel; while a responsive smile played on the benevolent countenance of the kind-hearted Maurice, which even the Saracenic excess of beard and moustache,—the badge of all his tribe,—was unable to invest with ferocity. Neither of them, in fact, seemed to have any other interest or occupation upon the face of the earth, than to watch over the slumbers of Rattle!

There were other things, however, in their

charge, of almost equal value.—Lady Ulva travelled with her jewels.—Not for the pleasure of wearing them, for she was in mourning; but because the casket contained, in addition to the diamonds presented to her by the Duke of Normanford, all the costly trinkets she had received as bridal gifts: and from these, with girlish predilection, she had been unwilling to part. It was a somewhat too important deposit to entrust to so young and inexperienced a person as Lucy Mason. But neither Lord Ulva nor his wife were old enough for much prudence in the things of this world;—Algy having allowed too many tens of thousands to crumble in his hands, to trouble his head about the safety of a trinket-box.

One day, when my eyes unclosed in Lucy's lap sooner than she and her companion suspected, I had an opportunity of appreciating the nature of the kindness by which Maurice had possessed himself of her confidence. He was trying to induce her to visit that pretty toy-shop of death,—the cemetery of Père la

Chaise,—by a description of its multiplicity of romantic inscriptions. The French, whose ascendant faculty is taste, lacking judgment to perceive that there are times and places too sacred for its exercise, have converted their national churchyard into a *Bazar Industriel des produits mortuaires*; and will probably, some day or other, bestow medals and premiums for the production of the most fanciful tombs and cheapest coffins, as at the other *Exposition des arts et métiers*.

But Lucy shuddered at the idea of visiting, as a matter of recreation, so sacred a spot. The last churchyard she had entered was to lay her mother in the dust; and having told him so with many tears, his condolences were so replete with good feeling, and his exhortations with good sense, that a bishop might have taken a lesson from them for his confirmation sermon.

By this fatherly sympathy, poor Lucy was tempted to detail to him, probably for the twentieth time, the sufferings of that beloved

mother, whose life was a prolonged death, produced by fretting after her husband, (the victim of an accident shortly after her marriage;) to preserve whose posthumous child from beggary she had denied herself sleep when work was to be had, and food when it was *not*;—and given a good education to his daughter, instead of procuring for herself the drugs and rest of which her failing strength had so much need.

To such a picture of domestic virtue, it was easy for the worthy Maurice to concede his sympathy. When Lucy (whose tears fell as remorselessly upon my coat as though it were a mackintosh) described the perseverance of her mother in plying the needle, when her hands were so tremulous with weakness that every moment it escaped her fingers, I was not surprised to see the courier pass his hand hastily across his eyes.

At one time, indeed, she said, their united industry had placed them above the world, so that they were able to commence a little busi-

ness on their own account, when unfortunately, the good manners of her mother recommended her so strongly to the favour of the great ladies, that their customers consisted only of the noblest of the land.

“ And this was my poor mother’s ruin!”—added Lucy, with quivering lips. “ I do not suppose such ladies are harder-hearted than other people; but having never felt a want of the necessaries of life, they *cannot* understand the value of money in small sums; and thought little of making us wait for that on which our very lives depended. And then, it is so difficult to approach them! Often, they never hear of the applications which it is the interest of the people about them to suppress, in order that other applicants who have purchased their patronage, may be first attended to.—But I did not judge them so leniently then, Mr. Maurice, as since I have waited on Lady Ulva. While watching by my mother’s bedside, and seeing her in want of fire and food, I sometimes used to think of the Duchess of

Wigmore, who had enjoyed the fruit of our labours without a penny of requital, and used our credit to procure finery, the payment of which could have been but as a speck of dust in her noble fortune, in a manner which, now that she is in her grave, I often pray to God to forgive!"—

Maurice had no hesitation in promising her absolution. "Just so," he said, "would he fain have his dear little daughter Louissette think and feel towards himself."—

We had not spent ten days in Paris, before I wished that they might be increased to twenty. For pleasant as I had found the admiration bestowed upon me when I appeared in public in my native country, the ecstasies that awaited me when I followed Lady Ulva into the Tuileries gardens, was almost bewildering to the understanding of a simple little dog!—

Those dear Frenchwomen are such enthusiasts!—Such lightning in their eyes,—such lava in their veins!—The Provençales, for

instance, under whose bronzed complexions rages a perpetual typhoon, and whose lustrous jet-black tresses seem made to be enwreathed with the orange and pomegranate blossoms of their fervid clime; while the genuine *Parisiennes*, with their nerves in a perpetual state of *crispation*, spasmodic whether in tears or laughter, are always *le flaçon à la main*, prepared for a scene or a sensation,—no matter whether a duel in the Bois de Boulogne, a new melodrame at the Porte St. Martin, a tiler fallen from the roofs of the Rue de Rivoli, or the *début* of the incomparable Rattle!—

By these, dear public, varying according to *l'échelle des femmes* from the smart, overdressed *notaire's* wife delighted to astonish the eye of the vulgar,—the only eye familiar with her charms,—to the beautiful duchess in her simple incognito, unconscious that the vulgar eye *possesses* sight, and indifferent to its presence as to that of the green trees or yellow gravel,—by these, I say, I was welcomed with

the same three rounds of applause, and precisely in the terms which had awaited my great ancestor in the arms of Marie de Medicis and the court of Henri IV.: “*Ah! dieu—l’amour de chien!*”—

“*Mais c’est à peindre!*”—“*Mais c’est à croquer!*”—“*Mais c’est à mettre sous verre!*”—“*Mais c’est à se mettre à genoux devant!*”—cried these angelic beings, in vociferous chorus.

At one time, I was in considerable apprehension lest, when I appeared in public, they should strike up the national anthem;—though what the national anthem may be, now that “*Vive Henri IV.*” has disappeared with the *drapeau blanc*, I really cannot pretend to say.—Some people consider the *Marseillaise* the national anthem of the French,—some, the *Parisienne*,—some, the stupid quartette from “*Lucille*,” “*Où peut on être mieux qu’au sein de sa famille*;”—which, in honour of the domestic virtues of the reigning family, is as regularly played before them on public occasions, as Yankee Doodle ought to be before President

Polk. For my part, I wonder they have never claimed back from us the "*Grand Dieu! sauvez le Roi*," of Lully, which we pilfered from them, note by note, and stanza by stanza, as performed before Louis XIV., by the pupils of St. Cyr; and feloniously converted to the glory of British loyalty, under the name of "GOD SAVE THE KING!"

But *basta!*—England is a jay that will not stand being twitted with her borrowed plumes.

I fancy that the poor "infatuated" marquis attributed a considerable portion of the admiration that awaited us whenever we made our appearance, to the beauty of his bride; though as well might he have taken to himself the compliments uttered around us, of "*Mais ce sont des oreilles qui n'en finissent pas!*"—or "*C'est une bête qu'on achèterait à poids d'or.*"

Since the dog in the famous picture of *Le Corbillard du pauvre*, which drew tears from all the washerwomen in Paris, and has been

worked in Berlin lambs-wool at every boarding-school, never, in short, was animal so popular!—Many protested that I ought to be presented; that I should receive from so enlightened a patron of the arts as Louis Philippe, the Legion of Honour, or a diamond ring such as Tom Thumb is in the habit of receiving from the Allied Sovereigns.—But my ears were not long enough for any pretension of *that* kind; and as regarded the Tuileries, my views were strictly those of the Faubourg St. Germain, my ancestors having fawned on the elder branch of the house of Bourbon, and being dogs of the legitimate succession.

At length, the day of departure was fixed, and the passport *visé*. Horses were ordered for the morrow, the imperials packed, the bills paid; and, on the eve of the journey, Lady Ulva, having taken Mason with her in the carriage to assist in some last purchases of women's gear, I was left in the charge of Maurice.

Midsummer was in its prime. The fragrant acacia trees, in full blossom, arrayed the chalky environs of Paris with their bridal veil of white; and the still sweeter bloom of the lime trees was fading away. So sultry, indeed, was the weather, that, till sunset, few had courage to venture out.

The coolness of dusk, however, tempted even my temporary guardian to take the air; and having ensconced me, to my great displeasure, under his coat, (much in the mode in which I used to be familiarly borne by the pragmatical Mr. Hill,) we set forth upon a lounge along the Boulevards; to enjoy the freshness of an atmosphere tainted with gas, asphalt, fermenting *ruisseaux*, and the mingled vapours of restaurants and estaminets, cigars at a sou a-piece, and *anisette* not worth a farthing.

Already I began to regret not having accompanied my mistress and her maid, to choose lace and match ribbons at the Barbe d'or; when Maurice suddenly glided, like a sword

into its sheath, or a serpent into its hole, into a long, dark, wicked-looking alley; and in a moment, involuntary reminiscences of Bill Sims and the dog-stealers pervaded my shuddering frame.—Could he be going to sell me into bondage? Was I fated to be left alone in Paris, after the departure of all that was dear to me,—like Mathilde in the Convent of Mount Carmel, when she saw from the tower the vessel bearing Cœur de Lion and his court “*cingler vers l’occident*?”—(I allude, of course, to the heroine of Madame Cottin’s romance, not to the neither good, bad, nor indifferent Mathilde of Eugene Sue.)

Another moment, and I blushed for my ungenerous mistrust, on perceiving by the light of a *reverbère* of crimson glass, suspended over the door we were about to enter, the word “BAINS,” as legible inscribed as “NO THOROUGHFARE” on the park gates of the Earl of Hardington.—On the eve of his journey, Maurice was intent, like a general hopeless of the Garter, upon securing a Bath.

I might profit by the occasion to enlarge on the superior cleanliness of foreigners in this respect, and the singular manner in which the hydrophobia of the working classes of Great Britain is fostered and enforced by the magistracy of the realm, had not the subject been used up last session in parliament; nor do I wish to get myself into hot water by infringing the patent of Lord ——'s wishy washy philanthropy.

But though baths and bathing were as novel to me then as to other untravelled aborigines of the British empire, I was not prepared to see them enjoyed with the mysterious secrecy in which Maurice enveloped himself for the operation. It is true, that mystery was the *only* envelope he had recourse to; which might account for the care with which, previous to undressing himself, he examined every crevice of the curtains; and, after locking the door, filled with paper the aperture of the keyhole, and removed the candle into the chimney corner.

With wonder that increased every moment, I sat surveying his proceedings from a mat at the extremity of the narrow bath-room ; till by degrees, the perturbation of his manner and his involuntary starts whenever footsteps were heard in the corridor, communicated, even to ME, a certain degree of nervousness. To my great surprise, I discovered that the shock of dark hair which I had always regarded as a national disfigurement indicative of his Gascon origin, was simply a wig ; the removal of which, apprized me that his own hair was of somewhat ardent yellow, and that his whiskers and beard were indebted for their sable hue to the same process which, like the approach of spring, caused the snows to disappear from the head of the poor Duchess of Wigmore.—As a married man and the father of a family, this transformation was scarcely likely to be the result of mere personal vanity. Such disguises have usually a far less innocent origin.

It struck me, too, that with his wig, the

courier laid aside his habitual suavity of manner. Was *that* also assumed?—Were the coarse oaths he muttered, on perceiving that his bath had been prepared at too high a temperature, and that he must wait for it to cool, the natural dialect of Monsieur Maurice?—Why, the least syllable of the mildest of them would have driven every vestige of colour from the cheek of poor Lucy Mason—if indeed she were likely to understand the turpitude of such phraseology.

My tremours were increasing.—A man who talks to himself *always* makes me tremble.—I am not sure but I side with the popular prejudice, that he who talks to himself, is talking to the devil; for the only two so accustomed, with whom I ever came in contact, were Bill Sims and Roper,—indisputable sons of Belial!

I suppose my eyes were dilated with dismay; for at that moment, the half-dressed courier made a remark about them which it was not pleasant to hear; whereupon I lay me down,

winking, as if preparing to go to sleep,—the usual practice of those who are inconveniently wide awake.

Shades of all the dogs in the Elysian fields, —what did I behold, when next I opened my eyes!—Not Christabel, when she watched the down-dropping vesture of her mysterious bed-fellow, could have been more frozen with terror; and if, instead of being a little dog as simple in my generation as Dr. Primrose, I were a horror-monger for the *feuilletons* or magazines, I would this moment stop short and write

(To be continued in our next,)

or

(*La suite au prochain numero,*)

for I have reached a horrible crisis of my life and adventures!

As it is, I suspend my narrative, like Tom Thumb, “only to grace my tale with decent horror;” and will now proceed to relate as succinctly and distinctly as I would fain have stated it to the police had words been vouch-

safed me, that this highly recommended ex-courier of Lord Hebberston,—this confidential servant of the most noble the Marquis of Ulva,—was neither more or less than an escaped *forçat*!—The letters T. F., branded indelibly upon his shoulder, avouched the wretch to have been condemned to *Travaux Forcés à perpétuité*!—

This was the motive of his furtive ablutions.—*This* was the origin of his so studiously keeping the house!—There could be scarcely a safer screen against the scrutiny of the police, than servitude in the establishment of a highly respected British nobleman; and if this and the black wig did not save him, the deuce was in it. I do not mean in the wig, though there might be truth in the libel.

And now, how was I to act?—What would become of us all?—Since the days of Blue-beard's wife, never was creature so overcome by a fatal discovery! Impossible to surmise the heinousness of the act for which the ruffian had been consigned to the hulks. It might

be robbery—arson—murder!—The *soi-disant* Maurice might be a Mingrat or a Papavoine!—and when I thought of the dear marchioness and Lucy Mason, the blood became congealed in my veins! If a poisoner, arsenic might be mingled with the first draught he administered to any one of us;—if a thief, the jewel-box was at his mercy; and what was worse, should mischance occur in that quarter, Lucy might be made to bear the blame!

How, *how* was I to make all this as manifest to Lord and Lady Ulva as were to me those loathly letters of the alphabet,—opprobrious as the initials of the —— Order?—How was I to place my master and mistress on their guard against this convicted felon,—the custodian of their lives and properties? Once in Italy, he might secure the confederacy of his brother bravi to suppress the whole party; and already a gang of Frà Diavolos, Massarones, and Pascaronis, appeared to be dancing before my eyes! A choking sensation impeded my breath. Like poltroons during the prevalence of the cholera, I well nigh died of fright.

As soon as the miscreant had bathed, and re-concealed his ignominious disfigurement, with renewed horror I saw him complete his course of disguise, by resuming the black wig, and applying fresh pigments to his mustachios. For the idea of being in his arms again,—the idea of being pressed to a heart which was, in all probability, a nest of vipers, and might be fostering murderous intentions against those to whom I had sworn fidelity,—sufficed to sicken my own !

Released on our arrival at the hotel from my horrible thralldom, I leapt into Lady Ulva's arms the moment I caught sight of her innocent face, as though unable to satiate myself with licking her hand, and expressing by bark and saltation my joy at seeing her again.

“ Rattle seems half mad to-night, my lady !” observed Lucy, with a gentle smile, little surmising the cause of my exuberant demonstrations.

“ He is perhaps as glad as the rest of us to

leave Paris this hot weather," was the languid reply of Lady Ulva. And when, a moment afterwards, Maurice tapped at the dressing-room door, to demand her ladyship's last orders for the morning, in his habitual tone of well-dissembled respect, (how different from the voice in which I had recently heard him uttering his horrible imprecations!) I could scarce refrain from a growl to mark my abhorrence of such hypocrisy.

I do not know that, under any circumstances, I should have enjoyed a long journey, in such weather, across the frightful country that calls itself *la belle France*. But with the painful consciousness now weighing upon my mind, it was truly insupportable. Not a moment's rest, either on my lady's knees, or in my elegant *niche*, which occupied the corner of the carriage opposite the jewel-box, the leathern case of which served Lord Ulva for a footstool. For he had been generous enough to cede to my habitation the place usually occupied by his costly *nécessaire*,

which now travelled in the rumble with—*that man*!—

Though we avoided the heat of the day by a long *siesta*, and travelling at early morn or nightfall, if we escaped the sun, the dust was still inevitable: and, among the plagues of Egypt, why was dust omitted?—Not all the glorious flowers and luscious fruits of southern climes, not all the blue skies or purple seas of the Mediterranean, compensate in my opinion for the dust in so many places their concomitant. Every sense becomes infected by it. Eyes, ears, nose, palate, all are in a state of torment; and as regards the beauties of nature, it does well to talk of foaming torrents and stately mountains, the bold outline of the distant hills and rich shadow of the valley; for of the more proximate features of the landscape, every charm is dust-eaten,—the foliage seared,—the herbage as that of the desert!—

In Provence, for instance, the country of the troubadours and King René,—the Ca-

naan of France,—the land of milk and honey, of the olive and the vine,—during the summer months no one opens his eyes or mouth save on peril of ophthalmia, and of eating the bread of grittiness for the remainder of the day.

By the time we reached Marseilles, whence it was Lord Ulva's intention to make up for time lost at Paris by steaming it to Genoa, we were all tanned as brown and yellow as the parched herbage in Hyde Park after a review in the dog-days;—and though my lovely lady was no yachter, nor addicted to sailing in any shape, the prospect of a few days at sea seemed positively reviving. To me, however, anything that served to approximate us to the land which, even without implicit faith in Mrs. Radcliffe and comic operas, has always been esteemed the fatherland of poinards and carabines, the stiletto and acqua Tofana, was like braving our destiny.

The first person I encountered on the staircase of the hotel at Marseilles, was Breiten-

stein, the *Kammerdiener* of the Prince of Saxe Krautland, who was proceeding to Italy with his governor; and the ingenuous and childlike joy evinced by the young prince at sight of our familiar faces in a land of strangers, so delighted Lord Ulva, that he expressed his satisfaction, *à l'Anglaise*, by asking the honour of his serene highness's company to dinner.

When the deed was done, I suspect it was as promptly repented; for Lady Ulva, dear creature, was now in delicate health, produced by her delicate situation; and being fatigued with her journey, would have greatly preferred a *tête-à-tête* with her lord.

But it was too late! The learned baron, eager to curtail an item in his travelling budget, had accepted his lordship's invitation almost before it escaped his lips; and when they made their appearance in our *salon*, and my master perceived how warm a flush of cordiality had overspread the prince's usually sallow cheek from the excitement of meeting those whom he esteemed his friends, he felt

almost ashamed of the hollowness of his hospitality.

English people, especially English people of Lord Ulva's age and grade, are apt to indulge in the habit of calling everything a bore, till everything becomes so. Nothing more common than to indulge their vanity by inviting royal personages to their houses; and then indulge it anew by calling them "bores." Whereas, if the epithet were retaliated on themselves and their invitations, they would be the first to raise a cry against treachery, and fancy themselves ill-used. But this by-the-bye ; for highnesses, whether serene or royal, are no guests for my *chenil* !

But if that *ingenuus puer*, the lank, sallow prince, were improved in appearance by the warmth of feeling that glowed through his cheeks, and imparted to his vague and divergent eyes the depth of colour of a bunch of forget-me-nots and earnestness of one of Goethe's romances, the governor was equally improved by being seen on ground less ex-

clusive than that of Wigmore Castle; where he had been afraid to sit or stand, to be silent or open his mouth, lest he should infringe some imaginary rule of etiquette.

By the injudicious selection of the party invited by the Duke of Wigmore to meet the young prince, moreover, the governor had been kept in perpetual hot water. Between his dread lest his illustrious pupil should imbibe the tastes and habits of the Count von Trichstenstein, whom he regarded as a disgrace to the empire, the worst possible specimen of the worst possible school, not of Young Germany, but of Young *rouéism* all over the world,—and his fear lest the pleasure of meeting a countrywoman and speaking his own language, should render the prince too sensible to the charms of the pretty countess,—the distracted Herr Baron had led much such a life as Moustache must have undergone while learning to dance,—a far worse than is implied in the usual term of “the life of a dog.”

But some Teutonic providence had borne him harmless. His highness had escaped, like Shadrach and his brethren, without singeing so much as a whisker; and the relieved baron, strong in his faithful discharge of his trust, had recovered the use of his eyes, ears, and understanding. An entertainment far more liberally and carefully served to an English milor than to a German prince, promoted the hilarity of the little party; and, under the influence of sparkling Ay, the young prince gazed with such expressive intensity upon the fair marchioness, that the governor might have relapsed into his former fancies, but that he was just then borne along by the torrent of his own eloquence, concerning a tour which he and his august charge had been making in the Pyrennees, including a recent visit to Toulon.

As soon as I had courage to withdraw my attention from the plate of minced chicken daily prepared for me by order of the marchioness, the first thing I heard was the baron describing (in many-sided adjectives and tre-

ble-bodied nouns that resembled a French diligence,—*coupé, interieur, et gondole*, which seemed to impart a sort of reverberation to his discourse, as though twice as pregnant with meaning as that of singly-speaking men)—their visit to the *Bagne*!

Yes! to the Bagne of Toulon;—and in honour of our illustrious guest, Maurice, the *forçat échappé* was actually waiting at table!—

Lord Ulva persisted in deliberately crunching his olives; the courier stationed behind him, stedfast as a sentry.

Like monumental bronze, unchang'd his look,

while the baron, entered into the impressive details of an execution at the galleys which he had been “fortunate enough” to witness.—And thrilling, indeed, they were!

“When an event of this terror-striking nature occurs *au bagne*,” said he, “produced by a second outrage, while under condemnation,—against the life, for instance, of a fellow

forçat, (the man whose life-taking *we* witnessed had, in a bootless attempt at escape, assassinated an officer,) the whole population of the *bagne* is assembled; drawn out in ranks under the appropriate local authorities, in the parti-coloured uniforms, announcing their various degrees of turpitude, and the penalty-term of guilt-expiation severally allotted; while in controlment of the passions of the heinous crime-spotted multitude, the cannon of the fortress are also drawn out, loaded, and pointed from all quarters at those doomed outrage-doers; and if tempted into outbreak or rescue, the slightest signal would suffice to sweep the whole multitude from the face of the earth. And so powerful is the effect of finding themselves thus doubly in the presence of death, — positively as regards the law-condemned culprit, — speculatively as regards those fearful engines of destruction, — that when the wretched being, pinioned, shorn, shrived, priest-attended, execution-beset, haggard, ghastly, hopeless, helpless, was paraded

by files of *gend'armes*, between long lines of *forçats* on their knees,—instead of the blasphemies and howlings that might have been expected to issue from such a congregation of fiends, such an army of thieves, assassins, violators, swindlers, and by their infraction of all law divine or human, profaners in their proper persons of the thrice holy image of God,—all was so still,—so still,—that on the coming of the condemned, you might have heard a pin drop!—*Gott in Himmel*, my lord and lady,—what a scene!—Thousands of human beings on their knees as one man,—one mass,—one degraded clod!—so that the heavy tread of the down-looking, bare-footed criminal, and the jangling of the *gend'armes'* trailing scabbards, as with drawn sabres they preceded his approach, were as audible in the midst of that cowed multitude, as though in the death-silence of the wilderness!"

So lugubrious was the countenance and so harsh the voice with which the baron uttered his narration, that all present shuddered as

they listened. Nay, so pale grew the cheek of the susceptible marchioness, that Lord Ulva was tempted to check the communicative vein of his guest by a peevish rejoinder.

“For my part,” said he, “I have little sympathy for the assize court and scaffold; and am content to let the laws of human justice take their course. I look upon mistaken leniency on such points as guilty of as many murders as the Brinvilliers, or the Bremen-poisoner, or Morrison’s pills. The moment a man’s knife has been aimed at the breast of a fellow-creature, I would cage him for life like a wild beast. Of those by whom blood has been spilled, let the blood be spilled in return!”

At this declaration, poor Lady Ulva grew paler than before; and the ghastliness of even the mild hereditary prince *looked* dissent.

“In this country,” resumed Lord Ulva, “one is forced to make up one’s mind on the subject of brigands, before one ventures to

stray to Terracina or visit Pæstum. If attacked by a ruffian of that description, I would shoot him like a dog; and were one of them to take refuge from the *sbirri* under my roof, as occurred some years ago to Lord A——, I would surrender him to the hands of justice with as little scruple as I should feel in killing a scorpion.—*Maurice! du Chambertin!*"

And I protest to goodness that the fellow filled his master's glass with a hand steady enough to have traced Cassini's meridian!—

"I can scarcely express to you, my dear lord," resumed the baron, after refreshing his learned throat with a bumper of that nectareous beverage; "how strange a revulsion it produced in my feelings, and those of his serene highness, to emerge into the sunshine produced by the christian company of honest men, after existing for hours in face of all that is most crime-spotted in the dregs of human nature;—thousands of fallen fellow-creatures on whose scared brows is placed

a several mark, as on the forehead of Cain, that whatever man lay hands upon him, shall take and slay !”

At that moment, a dish of *salade d'ananas* was offered to the eloquent governor by the firm hand and unaltered voice of Maurice !— But nothing would silence the prosiness of a *seccatore* to whom verbosity was a *gagne-pain* !—

“ If your lordship had ever the ill-fortune,” resumed he, “ to be confined, in sultry weather, amidst a noisome crowded popular assemblage, in a narrow chamber, reeking, defiled, tumultuous, disgusting, and malignant, and find yourself, by sudden release, translated to the pure buoyancy of the summer atmosphere, —over your head the laughing blue skies and ethereal canopy of Heaven,—under your feet, the green-springing turf enamelled with flowers,—around you, space, joy, freedom,—action-uncontracted and breath-unshackled freedom,—you will understand our sensations of ecstasy on emerging from the soul-oppressing durance of the *Bagne* of Toulon !”

And all this time, as I said before, Maurice with the ineffaceable T. F. branded on his shoulder, stood respectfully waiting behind the speaker's chair!—

If, during the long-windedness of the Herr Baron, or Lord Ulva's more abrupt and incisive threats, a spark kindled in the depths of his dark eyes,—so overhung by their brows that they could only be self-lighted, like the cavern incrustated with precious stones described by Apuleius, or the mind of the Right Hon. Lord Brougham,—that inward fire was perceptible only to the keen observation of Rattle!—

The little dog was, as usual, the Solomon of the party!

CHAPTER VII.

Je jouissais d'un de ces grands momens de solitude où il se fait autour de nous un silence et un vide profond ; où le monde nous permet de nous regarder nous mêmes, et de savoir qui nous sommes ; où nous profitons de ce rare et bizarre intervalle de paix, pour faire le triste inventaire de notre vie, et descendre en tremblant dans le caverne de notre âme.

PHILARETE CHARLES.

EVERY one who entertains the pretension of writing or talking well, is sure, in the course of his life, to have a shy at Rome. Most people, indeed, are content to say ditto to Corinne, who talked prose run mad ; or Eustace, who wrote poetry grown tame ;

—or try to get up a little sentimentality while exclaiming,

Roma,—Roma,—Roma,—Roma!—

Non è più com' era prima.

But allow me, dear public, to add that, if no longer what it was in the olden time, the Eternal city scarcely resembles what it was in the days of Corinne.—I *must* do it the justice to declare that, so far from being addicted to the blues, I never saw a city with less pretension to benefit of clergy. Instead of troubling itself about ovations for poets, the only person crowned, in *my* memory, by the Romans, has been a second-rate operadancer.

And then, instead of the Niobe of Nations, exhibiting, as described by Byron, a “*voiceless* woe,” she is a greater scold, and shriller of intonation, than the most whist-playing dowager of May Fair! I know not whether *Wisdom* cries in her streets; but it is undeniable that every body else does.

We visited it after loitering away the hot weather at a pleasant villa on the Arno. By the discharge of their painful duties at Genoa, the spirits of Lord Ulva and his wife became too depressed for a hasty prosecution of their journey; and having determined that her ladyship's confinement, which was to occur about Christmas, should take place at Rome, they resolved to spend the early portion of the interim, Italianly, *in villeggiatura*.

It goes to my heart to speak unkindly of the marchioness,—to whose good qualities, when Lady Jane, I did such ample justice; more particularly since, by abusing my mistress, I shall appear to have imbibed one of the vilenesses of menial life. I cannot, however, but admit that I consider it a proof of a callous heart and unintelligent mind,—never to have surmised the cause of my restlessness when sentenced to remain at home with Lucy, during *her* visits to the Florentine

palaces of my ancestors.—Some hope of retracing in the Athens of Italy reminiscences of my ancient line, had animated the dreariest moments of my tour ;—had reconciled me to the dust of France, the fleas of Italy, to drought, garlic, fustiness and fatigue. Over roads as rugged as the verse of Victor Hugo, not a whine had I uttered ;—swallowing my affronts and the worst of *fricots* with the stoicism of a Cato. And now that the hour had struck for my compensation, instead of being enabled to visit the halls or sepulchres of the illustrious patrons of my forefathers, no sooner was the carriage ordered at Schreiber's to convey Lord and Lady Ulva on their round of lionizing, than the hollow voice of Maurice exhorted me, in the words of Lady Macbeth—
“ To bed—to bed !”—

Such contumelious usage was as though a legitimate descendant of Sully were left *faisant pied de grue* at the gates of the old castle at Pau ; while his less privileged fellow-travellers

proceeded to do homage to the cradle of Henri IV. !—

In these credulous days of general incredulity—"an age terrified at scepticism, but destitute of faith,"—the self-same folks who believe in mesmerism and the cold-water cure,—the music of Balfe and sauces of Lopresti,—deny the existence of Swiss homesickness, and of that only universal language—*la voix du sang* !—For my part, who do *not* hold with Aristotle that

Ἀρχὴ τῆς οἰφίας ἀπιστία.

I believe in the voice of nature as implicitly as in that of Lablache,—however much the worse for wear ; and can scarcely describe my emotions on first setting foot in the Lung' Arno.

Some years ago, an honourable English family of high foreign extraction, visited Paris for the purpose of renewing their ancestral connexions, in abeyance from the time of the

Norman conquest.—The severed branches of the ancient house had retained, meanwhile, in the two countries, an equality of distinction; the French count being a peer of France, the English gentleman a wealthy member of parliament. But although the descendants of the original stem had not, for the lapse of eight centuries, found themselves face to face, it is a truth as irrefragable as ever issued from the lips of a little dog, that the physiognomy and figure of the English M.P. presented, feature by feature, as strong a resemblance to the portraits of his kindred of the intervening ages,—many of whom being historical personages, had been limned by the first artists of their time—as well as of their French representative, as though his blood were pure from Saxon interminglement.*—There he stood, among his unknown relations, living and dead, as palpably one of their race

* Fact.

as I of the august family painted by Sir Peter Paul Rubens!—

If this be the case as regards physical nature, it is little to be doubted that the idiosyncrasy (though the fact be less easy of identification) exhibits similar identity. I am straying, however, from my subject to the brink of the terrible precipice of metaphysics;—an abyss far more alarming than that of the Leucadian steep or Tarpeian rock; the latter being as easy to jump as the ha-ha of Kensington Gardens, so that a Shetland pony would take it without winking!—

Suffice it, therefore, that my feelings on this interesting point were wholly disregarded; and when I managed to escape on one occasion from the *surveillance* of Lucy, and make my way as far as the gates of the Palazzo Pitti, with a degree of ingenuity and perseverance worthy of Benyowski or Baron Trenck, I was seized, ere I could perpetrate my entrance, by the ogre-like gripe of Mau-

rice, who had been despatched to my rescue ; and beaten till I resembled in colour and consistency one of those anomalous foreign dainties with Italian and German names, sold by Morel to figure in slices at bachelor breakfasts or bachelor-slaying picnics.—No more filial piety left in me the following day, than in an Egyptian mummy!—

Perhaps it might be my bruises,—perhaps the overpowering summer atmosphere of Italy,—which inspired me with such delight in the charming villa into which we retreated for the two ensuing months.—Now that, having surveyed mankind and dogkind from China to Peru, and traversed a considerable portion of the earth's surface, I am entitled to consider myself something of a cosmopolite, I have no hesitation in asserting that the most luxurious hour allotted to human enjoyment in this world, is the brief twilight of an Italian day ; in a garden of glossy evergreens, crowned by a marble terrace, and reflecting itself in

the waters of a glassy stream,—now curled into a lightsome ripple by the morning breeze—now mirror-like and still, as though listening, like oneself, to the mellifluous warbling of the nightingales in the adjoining thickets of ilex and myrtle.

I could scarcely persuade myself, while fixing my eyes upon Lord and Lady Ulva as they wandered hand-in-hand along the stately balustrade of the terrace, or wound loiteringly towards the Arno down the *boschetti* or along the covered walks, like one of the happy couples described by Bocaccio and still existent on some faded canvas of Titian,

Which cast

Their shade upon the laurels as they pass'd,

that they were the same creations of conventional life which had found pleasure in flaunting their effeminate dandyism and silly sentimentality, day after day, hour after hour, in the vulgar publicity of Hyde Park !—

They *now* seemed to have alighted upon the sphere apportioned to them by nature,—and so did I. *My* race was calculated for the rose-gardens of the sunny east,—for the *bel-respiro* of luxurious Italy ;—not for the fog, and mist, and mud, and sleet, and rain, and sullenness of the humid climate of Northern Europe ;—and it was a wanton act on the part of Mary de Medicis to bestow poor Bijou on a prince of the house of Stuart ; who, though banished his hyperborean country, retained even a chance of being restored to the damp throne of his ancestors.

The only drawback, in short, upon my more than happiness, my *beatitude*, at the Villa Verdasti, was the consciousness that so long as we abode there, the family was doubly in the power of the ruffian to whose superintendence its isolated household was confided. Three Italians, selected by himself, composed its complement, independent of the out-door servants, who slept apart from the house, over

the stables;—and so detached was the villa in all its interests and arrangements, that the inhabitants might have been massacred three times over, without exciting the notice of the local authorities.

The court-yard, it is true, was guarded by a grim old mastiff. But the animal, who was past all work and whose good-nature had dropped out with its teeth, could do nothing but growl. Brobbo often reminded me, indeed, of the poor old Spectator, grinning to show the fangs it no longer possesses; more especially when Lady Ulva approached the kennel, when the struggle between submission and savageness reminded me of the excruciating struggles apparent in that senile periodical, in pronouncing sentence on some popular work, which it has not the generosity to praise, or courage to condemn. For it has now good reason to remember of those it has wantonly injured, that “*castigata remordent!*”

But the more unguarded his masters, the

greater the vigilance of Rattle. The London police, (the patent thief-takers of the civilized universe,) declare that a far better security against burglars than bolt or bar, is a little yelping dog; and I can positively assert that, during the two months we remained at Villa Verdasti, I slept like a chancellor of the exchequer, with one eye open. My life was a perpetual watch.—I became skin and bone:—or rather skin only; for in bone, I should at any time be beaten out of the field by a full-grown lark.

Judge, therefore, anxious reader, what became my anguish of spirit, when Lady Ulva, rendered irritable by her situation, declared one morning, at breakfast, that, my rustlings in the night being insupportable, thenceforward I was to sleep in Lucy's room, in another wing of the house!—I thought I could perceive a wicked glance of triumph brighten the dark eyes of Maurice at the announcement: and, conscious that, in renouncing my fidelity

of guardianship, my dear lady forfeited her sole security, I considered her doom as sealed! —The Whigs, on their departure from Downing Street, could not have felt more commiseratingly that all was up with the queen!

I tried, indeed, to soften her determination by a vivacious display of affection; leaping upon her lap with the most importunate caresses, and fixing upon her face the fond eyes in which tears were gathering.—But, absorbed in herself and her lord, she was beginning to take less heed of Rattle; nor could there be a stronger proof of the sincerity of my attachment, than that I loved her the more for seeing her predilection in my favour give place to a more Christianly affection.

Installed in Lucy's room, my anxieties were redoubled. My quick ear was constantly on the alert, to catch the smallest movement in the house. If the wind but stirred the broad leaves of some tulip trees, that grew in a

corner of the court-yard near the house, I was on my feet.—When the air was tranquil, and sound there was none, the very stillness alarmed me; and as I lay, trembling in every limb, at the foot of Lucy's bed,—(my gorgeous habitation remaining as an ornament of the state chamber,) I used to fancy,—perforce of listening and listening in the midnight darkness so fearfully instinct with terrors,—that I could *feel* some person stealthily approach the bed, and pass a hand searchingly over our faces!—I was getting, in short, as nervous as the fine lady victims of sal-volatile and hyson tea.

But either the growling mastiff, though toothless as Christabelle's, or my own yelp, or the Mantons of my noble master which were kept in his chamber constantly charged,—(Lord Ulva, because living in an Italian villa, having fortunately taken to doing a bit of Byron, and shooting at a mark,)—restrained his evil intentions. My eye was constantly

upon him. For every day, after those terrible nights, I rose with the oppressive conviction that it might be the one selected for his murderous purpose.—If Maurice looked heated or anxious, my own blood became equally fevered;—if cool and self-possessed, I fancied him nerve-strung by desperation.—If he did but sharpen a knife, I felt as though the keen edge were at my throat!—

On one occasion, I saw him take from his bosom a small packet, and carefully examine the contents,—then, after looking round to ascertain that no one was observing him, cautiously replace it in his vest; and that day, as he was waiting at dinner, every time the miscreant offered wine to my poor dear lady, I contrived, by barking and flying at his feet, to attract so much attention towards him, that if it *were* his intention to mingle poison with her cup, it was signally defeated.—I was a little disconcerted, however, by the subsequent discovery that the mysterious packet contained only a dose of calcined magnesia!—

But my fears, if premature, were not wholly groundless. One evening, after dinner, instead of following Lord and Lady Ulva as usual into the gardens, to frolic before them as they descended the *Boschetti*, or repose at their feet, while they sat musing side by side, near a tank where the water-lilies unfolded casket-like their ivory leaves to reveal their golden treasures; or watching the gelid stream go by, from the marble landing steps to which their boat was moored,—having been wholly sleepless the preceding night,—a *nuit blanche*, painful as the *insomnies* of Madame du Deffand,—I remained stationary in a corner of the sofa in the saloon; dreaming, as exiles, whether dog or man, are apt to do,—of home!

Now, I seemed to be carousing with Jasmin, Béchameil, and Breitenstein, at Wigmores Castle;—now, junketing with Ernest, at the Athol;—now, wandering beside the broad Serpentine, under the guidance of Bill Sims;

—always among thieves,—and always in a state of fear and loathing.

My condition resembled, indeed, rather a state of *clairvoyance* than of natural slumber; and had any one been at the trouble of interrogating me, I should have been, doubtless, able to suggest specifics for maladies pronounced mortal by the whole College of Physicians, or accurately to describe the state of the railway market in Mexico or Calcutta. For just as my dreams depicted my former owner, Mr. Roper, in the act of feloniously inserting his hand into the velvet *aumonière* of the poor Duchess of Wigmore, and I started up to give the alarm, the first object that saluted my waking eyes was Maurice, — quietly seated beside the sofa-table, — in full possession of the little ivory basket that served as *aumonière* to the dear marchioness; coolly taking an impression in wax of three little golden keys, one of which I knew to be that of the precious jewel-box!

In vain I barked—in vain endeavoured to bite; with the view of disturbing his flagitious operations. After fruitlessly attempting to silence me by a cuff, he seized me by the neck, and, swinging me out upon the terrace and closing the French windows behind me, deliberately resumed his operations!

My first idea was to alarm my lady. Bounding from slope to slope, till at length in my headlong speed I rolled over and over down the steep like the mysterious dwarf in Vathek, I attained Lord and Lady Ulva at their favourite spot; seated hand in hand beside the river, reasoning, as lovers reason, of life and death, of love and immortality, in a strain that might have imparted lessons to Petrarch, Shelley, or Bulwer.

As I flew barking towards them, they evidently thought me a nuisance, for breaking the charm of their delicious *reveries à deux*; and I had the mortification of hearing Algernon observe to his wife, while a glow of exacerba-

tion tinged his still effeminately fair cheek,—
“What a bore that dog is growing!”

As to affording them the slightest insight into the cause of my disturbance or their own danger, how was it to be done?—Though, to an intelligent mind, the intonation of my voice ought to have conveyed impressions as graphic as the symphony of Félicien David, the epic of fiddles,—it fell on unobservant ears. They did not understand a word I barked!—I was like a choice volume of Carlyle fallen into the hands of some leaden-pated reviewer.

While they sat there, interchanging their thrilling words and melting glances,—poor “infatuated” young people,—the treacherous act was accomplished; and from that day, knowing the property of my master to be doubly in jeopardy, I kept double watch. I neither slept nor ate; and when we quitted the Villa Verdasti for Rome, in the month of October, I vow to Jem that my poor frame was attenuated as Job’s.

Such was the cause of my unobservant listlessness on our southern journey. The most exquisite scenery had little attraction for one whose long ears were perforce pricked up through the night, to certify that the blind mole heard not a foot fall; and whose weary eyes were consequently closed all day.

Once esconced in the carriage, the jewel-case being safe in the opposite corner and the courier in the rumble, no considerable mischief was to be apprehended; and it was *there* only I lay on a bed of roses!

“Men travel with different views, *sua cuique voluntas*,” observes a famous tourist.—The object of *my* expedition seemed to be simply that of a Bow Street runner; but Lord Ulva, when the melancholy purpose of *his* was fully accomplished, having discovered that two months of conjugal happiness among jessamine hedges and thickets of myrtle, requires some little diversification, was giving largely into antiquarianism; a disease by which young and

old are liable to be severely attacked on visiting Italy, unless previously inoculated by a careful inspection of the collections of the British Museum, Anastasius Hope, or the French *Musée*.

Lord Ulva, whose adolescence had been absorbed by the study of horses and dress, was, I foresaw, likely to take the disease in its most virulent form. During our stay at Florence, Maurice had performed one of the duties of his courierate, by introducing a sham Abbate, having sham medals to dispose of; who emitted day after day, a rigmarole concerning the arts and institutions of the Etrurians,—worthy of the Cosmogony man in the Vicar of Wakefield,—by which the poor young lord was so thoroughly bemarvelled that, could he have had his own way, he would have travelled with an army of pioneers, and, like Timon after his downfall, spent his life in digging.

On quitting the Villa Verdasti, nothing would serve him but we must proceed to Volterra, for the purchase of Etruscan pottery;—

though one might as well attempt to find a good French cook at Paris, or a fine turbot at Brighton. Some years hence, perhaps, the deficiency may be remedied ;—a company having been established at no great distance from Arezzo, for the manufacture of fictile vases, to be buried in the hills of Portone and Monte Bradone, for the purpose of being dug up again by Great British and Muscovite *Dilettanti*, (the only *cavalieri paganti* of the antiquarian species!)—But in *my* time, you might as well have looked for Etruscan vases on Primrose Hill, or in Colebrook Dale, as among the ransacked *ipogei* of Volterra.

Poor dear Lord Ulva fancied himself sufficiently amused, however, in poring over the fragments of the Guarnacci museum, and Palazzo Giorgi; full of extasies concerning lids of sarchophagi, remarkable only for the clumsiness of their sculpture, and a figure of Polyphemus, hurling a rock at Ulysses, and having two eyes in its head. As though the

rubbish of four thousand years ago, possessed any other value than that of tending to prove that our MÈRE ÉTERNELLE, the sempervirent earth, has survived kingdoms, dynasties, nations, and creeds,—the gods of our early worship—the tyrannies of our maturer endurance !

How the venerable grandame must, laugh, methinks, at the sauciness of the myrmidons who take her august name in vain, as their utmost standard of degradation ;—calling this fellow “a clod of the valley,”—the other, “a man of mud,” and talking so contumeliously of dust to dust, and the nothingness of the sons of clay ! Every spring doth she put forth the blossoms of her beauty,—smile in renovated verdure, and bring forth her fruits in due season, bright with the unchanging favour and grace of her Creator ; while rational man, accountable man, ennobled man,

Drest in a little brief authority,
struts his frivolous hour upon her surface ;—

finding sufficient purpose and pastime in surmising whether, four thousand years ago, the Etrurians were justified in depicting their fabulous giants with a couple of eyes !

I am afraid I shall pass for a little dogmatical ; and that “in Arno’s tuneful vale,” barkarolles were expected from me rather than the discords of archæology. But the solitudes of the Villa Verdasti had done wonders for the development of my philosophy. “*La silence et la solitude,*” says an able writer, “*sont deux puissances graves, qui mettent en regard le chien physique et le chien intellectuel, et les force à juger l’un l’autre.*” And were I, instead of indulging in autobiographical vanities, to favour the world with Rattle’s “Meditations on the Etrurian tombs,” a new Oxford Review or Old Gentleman’s Magazine might be established on the strength of pretended criticisms upon the work ; containing as many ells of quotation from my pages, as a tailor’s

coat of the superfine Saxon cloth of his customers.

Ere we quitted Volterra, by the way, I had the happiness of admiring a monument as sacred to the memory of the house of Medici, as the glorious chapel I had been deemed unworthy to enter.—In Lord Ulva's visit to the celebrated dungeon of *Il Mastio*, he was escorted by Maurice, who (the atmosphere of prisons producing some confusion in his mind) inadvertently carried me in his arms; thus affording me the gratification of measuring the greatness of Cosmo di Medici by one of the grand standards of princely power and popular subjection,—the ferocity of his prisons.—

The late grand Duke of Tuscany is said to have exclaimed, on visiting these tombs for living men, —“ *Poco per l'inferno, ma troppo per prigionie !*” and forthwith condemned them to disuse;—a leniency by which he not only betrayed the decadence of his power, but aggravated its enfeeblement.

At Wigmore Castle, I had been steeped to the very lips in Toryism of too vitriolic an astringency to indulge in the weak leaning of the age towards a maudlin and pernicious philanthropy.—When it becomes a question whether bad men are to die that good men may live, or good men be sacrificed in order to preserve the lives of a few ruffians, I am decidedly of the hanging committee.—It was by the club of Hercules, and not by a stick of barley-sugar, that the world was freed of its monsters.

Let Victor Hugo, therefore, write brilliant essays against Capital Punishment, and let Sir Hesketh Fleetwood translate them ; but as a matter of christian mercy and the general security of human life, there is far more evidence of clemency in the occasional use of the rope and guillotine, than in ten thousand reprieves.

A hiss from the gallery, as I live!—I cannot help it!—I speak as a dog of Medicean origin

might be expected to speak.—If ye want democratic claptrap, ye lean unwashed artificers! go seek it of Lady Rosamel's vulgar terrier.—I, be pleased to remember, am at this present writing a Royal Favourite!

But my readers, not of the gallery but the private boxes, will probably be as eager as I was to arrive at the Papal city; some, to prose about the yellow Tiber and the Coliseum; some, to chat about red coats and the English foxhounds.—Rome has always been a favourite halting place of the English caravan; far beyond the bounds of scamphood, and auspicious to the pretensions of dinner-givers and custodians of caste; and above all, boasting a *corps diplomatique*, (the electric telegraph of *élite* society,) exempted from the authority and supremacy of their own court.—Wanting an ambassador and ambassadress, every great lord and great lady of Great Britain is privileged to fancy himself supreme in a capital, acknowledged only, by our ex-electoral ex-kingdom of Hanover.

We found there the usual allotment of English society ;—*i. e.* a few Catholic families expanded into full bloom and bearing, in place of the pinched and crabbed insignificance into which they are forced in England, like a tortoise into its shell, by the influence of Protestant mistrust,—an honourable young couple or two, on whom their wedding-rings did not yet set easy,—and an honourable old one or two, economizing their Christmas hospitalities by a winter abroad ; the families of half a dozen country baronets, rubbing off the cubhood of the junior branches, and the families of a few *parvenus*, profiting by the universal *melée* of continental life, to steal edgewise into society.

By each and all, the Ulvas were warmly welcomed ; more especially when Lady Surcingle, who, as a far-dating countess, had for a moment trembled for the precedence she had previously maintained, discovered that it was not my mistress's intention to fatigue her-

self by going into the world; while Lord Ulva won golden opinions, by a declaration of his intention to establish a hunting stable, and assist in the naturalization of sportsmanship and slang in the fallen empire of the Cæsars.

A sad disappointment this to poor Jane,—who evidently expected that the uxorious tête-à-tête of the Villa Verdasti was to last for ever,—and whose subterfuge of apprehending fatigue from the exertions of dissipation, was a mere pretext for the selfish enjoyment of domestic peace. But, alas! the difference was soon apparent between a sojourn where she had no rivals in her husband's attention but a pedantic Abbate and lively little dog, and a city swarming with men of his own degree, and tastes, and pursuits;—where it would have required absolute churlishness to rebut the advances of Christchurch chums and Melton comrades, by all of whom he was welcomed with open arms and overflowing bumpers.

N'en déplaise à sa charmante épouse, he certainly lost nothing by restoration to the society of his own sex. Indolence and coaxing had threatened to renew his former habits of effeminacy; and before the end of ten days, his improvement was perfected by a severe fall from his horse in a famous run in the Campagna, and a severe relapse into champagne and chicken hazard, including a famous run on Torlonia. Lord Ulva was not only becoming "Algy" again, but, in bachelor parlance—"a famous good fellow,"—a thing which the happiest of men sometimes forgets how to be.

Like Valeria, pending the heroic feats of Coriolanus, Lady Ulva, meanwhile, remained at home, and stitched.—But stitching, though it may suffice for the happiness of a woman who is happy, plunges one who is out of spirits, still lower in the dumps:—a fact apparently well known to the sex,—for no sooner was my mistress's depression a matter of no-

tority, than her fair countrywomen would no longer let her stitch in peace ;—but came persecuting her with officious condolences on the neglect of her husband.

“ *Humana cosa è l’haver compassione degli afflitti !*” says Boccaccio, in the opening page of his Decameron. But surely it is no great sign of compassion to come and talk a woman to death, on the plea that she is dying of *ennui*? Ovid, at once the warm panegyrist and bitter satirist of the sex, asserts their jactant tendencies to be of so irresistible a nature, that the Roman women of his time could not refrain from chattering, even when offering up a sacrifice to the Goddess of Silence. But I confess I had not the remotest notion of the capabilities of feminine garrulity, till I listened to the *jabotage* of the fashionable magpies who beset my poor dear gentle lady.

There were the ladies Maria and Sophia Semiton, who, when not singing out of tune,

were talking out of time, or giggling out of place; caring for nothing but music, which showed itself somewhat ungrateful for a preference that was decidedly a *passion mal-heureuse*;—and there was Lady Surcingle, who, having alienated the affections of her husband by a temper as bitter as a north-easter, derived some solace from trying to render every other *ménage* as joyless as her own;—three weird women, never weary of stimulating the conjugal discontents which, almost unknown to herself, were arising in the breast of Lady Ulva!

“You cannot imagine, dear Jane,” cried the countess, (who, being a thousandth cousin of Lady Wormington, assumed the privileges of intimacy,) “what a relief it is to me, your passing the winter here!”

“And yet I fear I shall have very little power of contributing to your amusement!”—replied Lady Ulva, with the weary air and feeble voice that usually bespeak

forbearance towards the languor of an invalid.

“ I was not thinking of amusement! But before you came, my dear, I enjoyed the unenviable notoriety of being wife to the hardest rider and drinker in Rome; and now, Lord Ulva beats Surcingle by a neck!”

“ You should rather congratulate yourself, my dear Lady Surcingle,”—interrupted Lady Mary Semiton, “ that Lord Surcingle has pursuits of *any* kind to occupy his time.—What a nuisance is a man who, like Sir Henry Bingley, is always dawdling by his wife’s fire-side,—an effectual bar to pleasant music, or rational conversation.”

“ But surely there is a medium between being always at home, and *never*!” observed Lady Ulva, in a low voice.

“ How is a man to be at home, either day or night, who is absorbed by horses and play!”—retorted Lady Surcingle. “ Exceptionatus Blank told me last night, (when he

came in so late to the French embassy,) that he had left Lord Ulva and Surcingle at Rodomont Bragge's, engaged over head and ears at lansquenet, while *we* were waiting for them at the Vaudémonts'."

"Lord Ulva mentioned in the morning that he should not go to Madame de Vaudémont's," pleaded poor Jane. "We know so few people here, that those little diplomatic parties afford him no amusement.—Even in London, Ulva was never a party man."

"But you ought to have *made* him so, by going out yourself, and compelling him to form proper acquaintances," persisted Lady Surcingle, perceiving that the two music mad damsels had betaken themselves to the adjoining saloon, where they were occupied in turning over the music-books of their hostess. "Anything rather than the disreputable set of gamblers and opera-dancers with whom he and my husband spend their lives!"—

Lady Ulva's pale cheek flushed crimson.

—Terrible encouragement to her spiteful guest to proceed!—

“And by the way, my dear,” accordingly continued Lady S., (“for to *you*, who know not the meaning of the word jealousy, one *may* hazard such a question,) does Lady Ellen Howarth happen to have hazel-eyes and chestnut-hair?”

“My sister-in-law’s hair is soft and golden as unbleached silk, and her eyes are as blue as the Prince of Saxe Krautland’s!”—replied Lady Ulva.—“But in what way could the colour of Ellen Howarth’s hair excite my jealousy?”—

“Oh!—*nothing!*”—rejoined Lady Surcingle, with a smile full of significance.

“You have roused my curiosity too strongly to put me off with so vague an answer,” observed the marchioness, with gentle earnestness.

“In one word, then, my dear,” resumed her treacherous kinswoman, “I wanted to ascer-

tain whether Lady Ellen was the original of a certain miniature which happened the other day to fall in my way.”—

“ Belonging to my husband ? ”—

“ Now being painted, by his orders.”

“ And which has hazel eyes and chestnut hair ? ”—

“ Precisely !—There is some strange romance connected with this mysterious picture !—But I am not sure that I am justified in broaching the subject to *you*,” said she,—pretending to interrupt herself, and curiously examining the countenance of her friend.

“ Indeed you are !—I have far too much confidence in Ulva for anything of the kind to annoy me ! ”—replied the young wife, proudly ;—so proudly, that Lady Surcingle was provoked into completing her ill-natured disclosures ; which, as Lady Maria and her sister were now trying some new duets of Verdi’s, *en sourdine* on Lady Ulva’s piano, was not so trying as the first attack.

“ Since that is the case,” said she, “ I need not hesitate to tell you that, last Tuesday, being anxious to show to Exceptionatus Blank the copy which La Gherarda is making of Chalon’s sketch of me,—(the thing that appeared in the Book of Beauty a few years ago,) I went to her house to obtain it; and as she was absent, and I in a hurry, persuaded her Neapolitan maid to open her *studio*; where, half-finished, I found the most beautiful miniature I ever beheld in my life !”

“ The miniature to which you alluded just now ?”

“ Yes ! the fair one with the chestnut locks ! Before I had half done admiring it, arrived La Gherarda; when, moved by my raptures concerning the picture, and my inquiries whether it were to be disposed of, she admitted that it was painted on commission for the Marquis of Ulva :—then, startled by my look of amazement into a sense of her indiscretion, the foolish woman made matters worse by im-

ploring me not to betray her, as she had been enjoined to preserve the strictest secrecy !”

“ Enjoined to the strictest secrecy—and gossip to the first comer !—How scandalous !” faltered Lady Ulva, with her face as pale as marble.

“ ‘ Yet I am sure I know not *why* his lordship should be so anxious on the subject,’ continued the Gherarda,” said Lady Surcingle. “ ‘ For after all, what danger is there of compromising the fair fame of a lady who has been dead three hundred years !’ ”

“ *Dead* three hundred years ?” — cried the tortured wife, with an almost hysterical laugh. “ How absurd,—and how *could* you alarm me so causelessly !”—

“ *Alarm* you, my dear Jane ? Why you declared just now that you had implicit confidence in Ulva !”

“ And so I have !—But *all* men are more or less at the mercy of the designing coquettes who, in this country——”

“ In *this* country, my dear,” coolly interrupted her friend,—“ there exists no such thing as a designing coquette!—Nothing can exceed the downright matter of factness of the Italians, in affairs of the heart. A Roman *duma*, however high her social position, who happened to take a fancy to your husband, would admit it with as little scruple, either to himself or any one else, as she would have in avowing that she had been present the preceding night at the Fenice,—or had breakfasted on *pastecchi*. And with regard to the picture,” persisted Lady Surcingle,—“ though the *face* might be copied, as La Gherarda declared, from one of the ancient masters, the mode of dressing the beautiful chestnut hair was so completely that of the present day, that I could not forbear taxing the artist with duplicity.

“ ‘ You know nearly as much on the subject, miladi, as I know myself,’ was her evasive reply. ‘ The Marquis of Ulva called upon me soon after his arrival at Rome, to commis-

sion me to paint for him a copy of the famous Giorgione in the Palazzo Lucastara; enjoining me, at the same time, to adapt and alter the costume in my copy to that of the present day; by which charge, I perceived that the picture was selected less from its intrinsic merit, than from its resemblance to some living individual.’”

“ You conclude, then, that she *is* still living?” demanded Lady Ulva, in a voice more tremulous than before.

“ Only from the mystery observed. Lord Ulva would have made no secret, my dear Jane, of obtaining a copy of one of the chef-d’œuvres of the old masters, but that he was conscious of an *arrière pensée*.”

“ And was the countenance, then, so *very* beautiful?”—faltering my mistress.

“ Beyond description!”

“ I would give worlds to see it!” cried poor Jane.

“ With your husband’s consent, *that* might

be easily accomplished," retorted the countess; "for the miniature is at this moment in the house."

"In *this* house?" cried Lady Ulva, starting from her half-recumbent position, and gazing wildly around her.

"La Gherarda informed me that she was to send it home yesterday;—Lord Ulva being out of patience with waiting for the completion of the gold *fausse montre*, in which it was to be set."

"Set in a gold medallion?—Why he must intend to *wear* it!"—exclaimed poor Jane, with swelling bosom and dilated eyes.

"I will not pretend to guess what he means, my dear; nor need you, who have implicit confidence in him, make yourself uneasy on the subject. If he wishes you to know anything about the matter, he will probably show you the picture."

"No! I am convinced he will *not* show it to me," cried Jane,—looking herself the picture of despair.

“ Have you happened to see the young Princess Garafola, since your arrival here ?” abruptly inquired Lady Surcingle.

“ Not that I am aware of.—Why ?—Is *she* very beautiful ?”

“ *That* is what I wanted to inquire of *you*,—fancying she might be the original of the miniature.”

“ But I thought you said the original had been dead three hundred years ?” demanded Lady Ulva,—the evident confusion of her mind betraying the conflicting emotions of her heart.

“ My dear Jane, you are quite impenetrable this evening ! The miniature is an *adaptation* from Giorgione’s picture—not a *fac simile*. And never having happened to see Princess Garafola, with whom Surcingle informed me your husband was prodigiously struck,—or *she* with *him*,—I really forget which,—”

At that moment, Lady Maria and her sister, who had been murdering Verdi’s music as

barbarously as their friend was murdering not only reputations, but Lady Ulva's peace of mind, perpetrated a ferocious crash, by way of finale, and flaunted back into the room; to remind Lady Surcingle of an appointment they had undertaken to keep together, to meet Exceptionatus Blank, Rodomont, and the Philadelphi, who were also spending the winter in Italy, and affecting to do at Rome as Romans do, (the sure way, as Cep assured them, to be *done*,) to visit the studio of Macdonald, and walk in the gardens of the Villa Doria.

No sooner had they quitted the room, than the tears of my poor dear lady, with difficulty restrained during their presence, burst forth with a degree of violence that almost alarmed me. I had seen her weep before,—during the reign of Sir Seymour Manners, and under the tyranny of the Duchess of Wigmore. But those were soft silent spring showers, that refreshed as they fell; whereas every tear that

now fell from her eyes, seemed to sear them as with burning iron! Concealing her face amid the cushions of the sofa, she gave vent to her frantic grief;—poor agitated creature!—and on the eve of becoming a mother!

And all this time, if you will believe me, dear reader, (and what motive has Rattle to deceive you on such a subject?) Lord Ulva was as guiltless in this affair of the miniature, as though it had been a portrait of myself!—

Before we quitted the Villa Verdasti, a letter from his friend Vernon had commissioned him, should he visit Rome, to procure the best copy that could be had for money, of the *Lucastara Giorgione*; which he had always fancied as strong a likeness of poor Mary, as if taken for her portrait. The suggestion of altering the costume and fashion of the hair, were however entirely my master's:—the result of the same false taste which had formerly covered him with frippery, and now induced him to prefer

lansquenet with such fellows as Bragge and Blank, to domestic peace and quietness with the most attached of wives.

Poor soul! what would I have given for the means of re-assuring her!—And above all what would I *not* have given to punish that mischievous traducer!—

Before her tears were half exhausted, there unluckily arrived a little hurried three-cornered note from Lord Ulva, telling his dear Jane that, as the rain was falling in torrents, (he had two carriages at his absolute disposal!) instead of coming home to dinner, he had “promised to stay and dine *en garçon* with Cep.”

No apology,—no further explanation,—no expression of regret at thus leaving her alone!

And this was the husband in whom, only a few hours before, she had boasted of “implicit confidence!”—

CHAPTER VIII.

Hanc mihi expectivi, contigit; conveniunt mores; valeant,
Qui inter nos discidium volunt: *hanc*, nisi mors, mi adimet
remo.

TERENCE.

“It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself,” says Cowley. “It grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement; and the reader’s ears, to hear anything of praise from him.”

And if this be true of a man, how much more of a dog! Were I to relate the twentieth part of my sympathy in the temptations to which my dear lady was condemned at this most anxious moment of her life, I should be regarded as a little hypocrite.

The critics would say to *me*, as his sneering brother actors to Kean, when, in the onset of his London career, he exerted himself to do justice to a walking gentleman,—“The little man is trying to make a part of it!”—

I *did*, however, most sincerely pity her, to be so little understood and lightly cared for by one upon whose warmth of feeling and steadiness of devotion depended the happiness of her life. Lord Ulva was not wantonly cruel,—not even wittingly unkind.—But he seemed to consider that, like the queens of France under similar circumstances, his wife should be given over to the custody of her own sex, till released from suffering, and capable of becoming once more his companion; and thought it an act of charity to go and divert himself elsewhere, and relieve her from the necessity of exerting herself for his amusement.

And during his absence,—hunting, “dicing, riotously drinking,”—*I* alone was witness of

her tears,—of the achings of her heart,—of her hopeless interrogations of the future. Lord Ulva had said to her, in apology for the remissness of which she accused him in writing to the Duke of Normanford, whose chief happiness lay in his letters,—“I shall not write to my father again, Jenny, till I have the pleasant task of announcing to him the birth of our son and heir.” And she now took it into her head that if she became the mother of a daughter, or if the son and heir were taken from her, the already detached affections of her husband, would follow!—

If I might presume to advise the dowagerly class of the community, by nature, alas! as impermeable to counsel as the Treasury bench or a cathedral close, I would earnestly recommend them, instead of fooling away the understandings of those grown-up daughters, whom they tether to their sonatas and embroidery-frames long after they are of an age to contemplate without disguise the realities of life,

—to render them clearly aware, on the verge of matrimony, that if men cannot gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, still less can women obtain from men those softer sympathies, on which they are too apt to rely for the happiness of their lives.

Girls are brought up chiefly among their own sex; caressed, fondled, encouraged in feebleness as an accomplishment, and instructed that the exercise of domestic virtue suffices to secure the return of unqualified attachment. And when, in the ruder experience of the world, the mortified bride discovers rivals in her husband's public duties,—his pursuits, his pastimes, his friends, his acquaintance,—and ascertains how limited a portion of his sympathy is by prescriptive right her own, terrible is the moment of disappointment !—

Rare exceptions may be found, indeed; men, qualified by their own sex as “spoons,” and by the opposite as “the most amiable of mankind,” over whom the pleasures of the fire-

side retain a paramount ascendancy. But these are dangerous examples ; so great being the majority who regard their wives as subordinates, bound to go hand in hand with them, unquestioning, through their worldly career ; rather than impede the pleasantness of their progress by evermore pausing to inquire whether they are still loved, or endeavouring to get the advance by placing themselves troublesomely in the way ; — a pretension, *crede Rattlerus*, as though the shadow were to attempt to precede the substance !—

I fear, however, that my well-intended lecture will be thrown away ; like the volumes of “occasional sermons” one sees so profusely ticketed in second-hand book shops, or on the parapet of the Quai Conti.

A couple of days after the communication so indiscreetly or rather so maliciously made by Lady Surcingle to her cousin, she dined, with her far better half, at our palazzo.

Late formal dinner parties are, in all quar-

ters of the globe, the order of the day among the English "hairy stockoracy," who like the moon, carry their atmosphere with them, wherever they roll. Every body has heard of the Venetian who, on first visiting dry land, being mounted on a restive horse which he could not get on, took out his pocket handkerchief as he would have done in his gondola, to determine the course of the wind. "*Il vento è contrario!*" said he, and returned home in despair.

And scarcely less circumscribed and localised are the notions of those who export to the ends of the earth the habits of Hyde Park and May Fair, as well as their Times newspaper, their patent medicine chests, and Harvey's sauce. While foreigners regulate *their* dinner hour by the hours of the theatres, which, in melomaniacal Italy, it is a matter of religion to frequent, the English issue dinner-invitations at six weeks' notice, at an hour which negatives to those invited, all satisfaction in their pompous hospitality.

On the occasion in question, which was one of my collar-days, Lady Ulva felt scarcely equal to appear at table. But the advice of Lady Surcingle that, by the charm of her society, she should secure her husband against that of the Mesdemoiselles Mélanie so attractive to his companions, determined her to make a great effort to join the party; and I and Lucy, who knew how much the exertion cost her, were more grieved than gratified to perceive how delicately lovely she looked when, like myself, attired *en grande tenue*.

Exceptionatus Blank, who had not seen her since his recent arrival from Naples, was as full of compliments on her appearance, as the complete letter-writer; and even Lady Surcingle, who had been half afraid she might have gone too far in her communications respecting the miniature, was glad to see her poor victim able to put so good a face upon her cares.

Besides the Surcingles, we had that "blest

pair of sirens" the Semitons,—Cep and Rodomont Bragge, who though adverse as yes and no, were usually accoupled,—and by way of *hors d'œuvres*, two *attachés* to the French and Austrian embassies,—the head of the one curled like endive and nearly as green ;—the other, with his hair black, long, and straight as a Batavian canal, and *his* head, I suspect, as deep.

With the obsequiousness usually testified by foreigners towards the lady of the house, both fastened their assiduities on their poor dispirited hostess ; the less to be regretted, because, in the intervals of the thousands of questions they contrived to extract out of the weather and her own health, like Pinnock out of even the shortest of English reigns, I overheard Lord Surcingle interrogating Blank and Bragge, concerning the goings-on at Naples of Mrs. Jerningham and Sir Seymour Manners.

That I lent the full length of my ears to their replies, can scarcely be doubted ; for I

had every reason to suppose my poor dear mother still fostered in the establishment of the graceless pair. But I did not wish my mistress to be agitated just then by the sound of a name at one time so interesting to her ear.

“ Ay, poor fellow,—you may well call him *poor* Manners!”—replied Exceptionatus to Lord Surcingle’s inquiries. “ *I* look upon him as having had his heart picked, as some people have their *pockets*. Between you and I, there was no more of his own will in that confounded foolish affair of his, than in a journey in a police-van; and I fancy he is thoroughly to be pitied.”

“ Weakness, my dear Blank, is a poor excuse for wickedness!” remonstrated Rodomont, who, since Puseyism came into fashion, affected to be growing serious. “ The moment Folly becomes Crime, she incurs the full penalty of her transformation.”

“ Whether crime or folly, I’m sure Man-

ners pays his full mulct for it!" retorted Exceptionatus. "Because a silly piece of fantasticality whom he happened to live near in the country, chose to quarrel with her husband and complain to *him* of being threshed, (though doubtless deservedly,) he was *preux chevalier* enough to interfere in her favour; for which, the more's the pity, he gets a worthless woman saddled upon his shoulders for life!"—

"*Preux chevalier* enough? You mean ass enough!"—interposed Lord Surcingle, shrugging his shoulders.

"And because, now she is *his* wife, he does not choose her to conduct herself in the same flighty manner she used when she was Jerningham's, poor Manners passes at Naples for a brute and a monster!" added Cep, with good-natured commiseration. "The worst of it is, that *he* will find no one to do *him* the favour he did Jerningham, of ridding him of a troublesome, heartless, expensive wife;—

having nailed himself like a kite, by way of warning, against the barn-door!"

"Ha! ha! ha!—*Poor* fellow!—Poor Sir Seymour!"—reiterated Lord Surcingle.

"It is easier to pity him here, than at Naples," resumed Cep;—"for when *with* him, he puts one as much out of patience as Lady Manners has put *him*! Manners is grown as uppish as a game cock. One can't say a word to him."

Rodomont Bragge having hazarded a retort, implying that lucky was the man to whom Exceptionatus the chatterbox attempted to say only *a* word,—one of their usual sparring hunts commenced; which had so little charm for my ear, that I allowed my attention to be diverted to the conversation going on between Lady Ulva and the young Count Wrebna; who was recommending her, instead of devoting her attention exclusively to the ancient monuments of Rome, to witness the numerous institutions as imposing to Pro-

testant eyes as august to Catholic, to be met with only in the Papal city.

Wrebna, who had been attached to the Austrian mission in London, and was versed in the well-bred monotony of London *salons*, which exhibit the dull uniformity of a paper of pins, could not but appreciate the impression that must be made on English eyes by the rich costume of the cardinals, and coquetish prelatism of the young *Monsignori*;—their scarlet or purple, richly relieved with lace and lawn, being even more imposing than the courtly glare of military uniforms common in other capitals.

“ One of the most touching ceremonies of the Catholic Church will take place to-morrow at St. Peter’s,”—added he; “ the washing of the pilgrims’ feet by the noblest ladies in Rome ;—and Madame la Marquise should not fail to be present. Two of the loveliest women in Italy will officiate; the Princess Vittoria Sforza, and the young Princess Garafola.”

Lady Ulva, remembering how strongly her husband had insisted on witnessing this ceremony, fancied his eagerness accounted for by the presence of her whom she believed to be the original of the miniature so cruelly enlarged upon by Lady Surcingle.

“Is the Princess Garafola fair or dark?”—inquired she of Count Wrebna, in tremulous accents, but with assumed unconcern.

“*Comment!* Is it possible that your ladyship does not know the Garafola by sight?”—interrupted the frizzled French attaché, (who was known in the society of Rome by the name of Count Chicoré.) “Seeing Milor with her last night at the opera, I concluded”—

“The Princess Garafola,” resumed Wrebna, who suspected that his brother diplomatist was on the brink of a blunder, “is a brilliant *blonde*,—with wavy chesnut hair.”

“In the style of the Lucastara Giorgione?”—inquired Lady Ulva, in accents scarcely audible.

“ *Précisément !* ” — cried the French attaché, — who, knowing nothing about pictures, fancied that his fair hostess was alluding to some public performer, of whose name it did not become his *bon-ton* to be ignorant.

And a moment afterwards, I was not surprised to see the poor dear marchioness rise with some difficulty from her seat, and totter from the room. Her desire was accomplished, however, of reaching her own apartment before she lapsed into total insensibility.

Her “ situation,” — of course ! — Were a lady so “ situated ” to be struck by lightning, her death would be attributed to natural causes ; and it was therefore doubly malicious on the part of Lady Surcingle to persist in inquiring “ what *could* be the cause of dear Jane’s sudden indisposition ? — Was Sir Seymour Manners a relation of the Barnsford family ? — For she had noticed Lady Ulva’s agitation the moment his name was mentioned ! ”

On this hint, Exceptionatus and Rodomont were beginning to apologize for the free use they had made of his name ; when Lord Ulva, somewhat stiffly, assured them there was not the slightest connexion between the Manners family and that of Lord Worthington.

“ The only grounds for not disparaging Sir Seymour Manners in this house,” added he, with no small *hauteur*, “ is that, as you are both aware, he is my intimate friend.”

Poor Jane, who, by the way, had heard no more mention of the name of Manners, than if she had been dining at Sorrento, instead of the Via Tordenone,—did not re-appear that evening. Her medical attendant, sent for in haste by Lucy, administered an opiate, and desired that she might not be disturbed. But he also desired that her nurse should be in readiness in the house ; so that no one was surprised when, the following day, the event which had been previously anticipated as at a

month's distance, was declared to be on the eve of accomplishment.—Lucy, indeed, was sadly flurried and alarmed; partly from inexperience in such scenes, partly because the marquis had gone out with Lord Surcingle after the hounds at too early an hour to be apprized of the change in his lady's condition, leaving uncertain the period of his return.

A charming opportunity was thus afforded for Lady Surcingle to drive from house to house, and deplore in succession with all the gossips of her little coterie, the "shameful conduct of Lord Ulva in hastening out of reach the moment he knew the life of poor dear Jane to be in danger!" adding, to those with whom she was on confidential terms, that "to be sure it *was* some provocation to a man to see his wife betray such interest in the fate of her former love, as to swoon, as poor dear Jane had done, at mere mention of the name of Sir Seymour Manners."

Acting, however, on the perverse impulses of a mind, which would have been utterly vacant but for the paltry envy and jealousy to which it afforded shelter, her ladyship was making the worst of the business. The life of Lady Ulva was in no sort of danger; and though, by an unlucky coincidence, a tedious run terminated the chase that day, at the distance of six leagues from Rome, and in weather so untoward, that such of the sportsmen as were in at the death, agreed to dine together at Castel Vicenzo, and drive home together afterwards, in preference to a long wet ride on horses thoroughly knocked up,—when the marquis returned at nine o'clock to the Palazzo Strozzi, the worst news which the servant, posted in the hall to greet him, had to communicate, was—that he was the father of a little girl!

For a single moment he felt almost as sick at heart from the surprise, as poor Jane had done the preceding night. But before another

had elapsed, he had ascended the stairs three steps at a time, and was in the vestibule of Lady Ulva's apartment; interrogating Lucy, with breathless anxiety, concerning her lady's condition, and reluctantly submitting to the decree of the nurse that her patient was on no account to be disturbed.

When with trembling hands he took me, shortly afterwards, from the arms of Lucy, announcing his intention to carry me off to his own room lest I should be in the way, how I longed to assure him that the dictates of nature were more peremptory than the orders of nurse or physician!—that a few affectionate words from himself would form a better restorative for my poor lady, than “poppy, mandragora, or all the drowsy syrups of the East!”—nay, that it would be impossible for her to close her feverish eyes till she had heard from his own lips that little Lady Jane Howarth was not an unwelcome addition to his family! So far, however, from being able to exhort

him, I was forced to listen, throughout that miserable night, to his incoherent ejaculations;—accusing himself, one moment, of having been absent from home on an occasion so memorable to his domestic happiness;—the next, reviling himself with the folly of having suffered himself to be betrayed into matrimony;—and finally, execrating the necessity of communicating to the Duke of Normanford intelligence so unwelcome as the birth of a daughter.

For, little as his conduct as Lord Algernon Howarth accredited his sense of filial duty, he was sincerely attached to his father; and, aware how much of the venerable duke's remaining happiness in life was invested in the perpetuation of his ancient line, he had hoped that an heir to the house of Normanford would afford some compensation for the generous sacrifices repeatedly made in his favour.

A portion of the night, therefore, was devoted to the enditement of a letter to Nor-

manford Court, conveying the evil tidings in such terms as he thought most likely to soften the disappointment; and by enlarging to Lady Ellen on the previous delicacy of poor Jane, and his satisfaction that her danger was over, he was sure of enlisting the kindly sympathy of his sister.

So slow was he, however, in concocting his letter,—a circumstance unprecedented to his frank, impulsive nature,—that I saw he was not writing out of the fulness of his heart, and that the happiness of which he spoke, was supposititious. For the first time, his pen evinced hesitation and reluctance while accomplishing the words “dear Jane.”—She was, indeed, no longer the “dear Jane” she had been.

The hints of Iago, Countess of Surcingle, were bearing fruit, and his paternity sat uneasily upon him;—for, till near morning, in spite of the fatiguing day he had undergone, and his subsequent emotions, instead of retiring

quietly, like Hugo, to his "lonely bed," he continued to pace the room, as though in training for some pedestrian feat.

As if it were not grievous enough to be banished from the chamber of my gentle lady, I had, in short, the vexation of being kept awake till daylight, in a manner which had not occurred since those harassing vigils of reading-up for parliament at Roper's.

I was resolved, at least, that the night following should repay me for my sufferings; and when the papa of little Lady Jane, after a hasty glance at her featureless face, and an imperative assurance from the nurse that the short interview which had been allowed him that morning with the *accouchée* could not be renewed till the morrow, whistled to me to follow him to his room, I contrived to sneak off as we were crossing the vestibule; and, instead of accompanying Lord Ulva, installed myself unobserved in my mistress's dressing-room; which was divided from her bed-cham-

ber by a narrow passage, fitted up as a china closet.

I had the chamber entirely to myself; and about midnight, heard the nurse bolt from within, the passage door,—so that I stole into my comfortable *niche* with the pleasant security of an undisturbed night's rest.

I suppose it was my previous vigil that made me sleep like a marmot. For though usually so alert in my watch, that a mouse could not scud across the room, or a fly buz in the window without my notice, I certainly heard nothing the least like the turning of a door handle, ere I observed Maurice bare-footed and with a lantern in his hand, stealthily traverse the room; and, having placed the lantern on the table, quietly assume a seat.

So much was the fellow at his ease, that I could not doubt his having already fastened the door by which he had entered, as I had myself seen him do the one leading to the passage, already bolted from within; and

though nothing would have been easier for me than to have startled him from the accomplishment of whatever nefarious purpose he might have in view, by creating an alarm such as would rouse the house, I had heard the nurse insist too strongly on the necessity of absolute repose for her delicate patient, not to feel that *any* mischief would be secondary to that of disturbing Lady Ulva.

As still as death, therefore, did I remain, while the caitiff proceeded to remove to the table the heavy jewel-case deposited on a *guéridon*, near the passage door; and, having carefully applied a key, (made doubtless from the waxen impression I had seen him execute,) drew forth tray after tray of the sparkling treasures within; in contemplating which, his eyes appeared to sparkle over his spoil with almost rival brightness.

Less versed than myself, however, in the secrets of the jewel-box, he was evidently surprised that it contained no diamonds.

Bracelets, broaches, chains, earrings, miniatures, were there in costly profusion. But the diamonds he had seen worn by Lady Ulva at a fête given by the Grand Duchess of Tuscany during our stay in Florence, were not to be found !

For some time, he continued to examine the miscellaneous trinkets before him, with a scrutiny as careful, or rather as capricious, as that of a beauty selecting a becoming *parure* at Janisset's or Emanuel's ; and between the breadth and depth of shadow created by the lantern-light, — the marked and impressive countenance of Maurice,—and the rich brilliancy of the treasures he was exploring,—a picture was created such as might form an admirable pendant for Warren to paint as companion to the Misers of Quentin Matsys, at Windsor Castle.

It was not till he was in the act of replacing the lower tray, which contained family miniatures in rich settings, that from the

depth of the box, he surmised it might contain a secret drawer or *cache*, the spring commanding which was still to be sought for.

To this point, therefore, the wretch now directed his attention; taking the box into his hands, and turning it on all sides in succession, towards the light of the lantern, with the vain hope of discerning some hinge or screw, facilitating his discoveries. From my lair, I could hear him faintly muttering the same terrible imprecations which had escaped him in Paris, concerning the cooling of his bath; and I was beginning to entertain hopes that his villany might be in some measure defeated.

Stealing gently forth, therefore, under cover of the deep-shadows created by the lantern, I crept under the sofa on which he was seated; and by a silent attack on his brawny leg, so startled him from his examination, that the box escaped his hands, and fell upon the table.—In a moment, my expectations were

realized, by the dull heavy tread of the fat nurse traversing the corridor from Lady Ulva's chamber, to withdraw the bolt for the purpose of ascertaining *who* had presumed to enter the sacred precincts of the dressing-room. But to her surprise, she found the door secured on the other side! In an audible whisper, she instantly demanded "who was there?"—

A less experienced rogue than Maurice would have sought security in silence, or probably extinguished the lantern. But conscious that the light had been seen, the noise heard, and that both the doors of the room were safe,—he replied by a loud "sh!" so bold and authoritative, that the nurse, concluding Lord Ulva himself to be installed in the dressing-room, hastened to obey his lordship's orders, and retreated in confusion!—

Alarmed, however, by the risk he had run, Maurice was about to replace the tray of miniatures; when he perceived that, jarred by

the fall, the lid of the secret drawer had started; and, lo! with unconcealed exultation he drew forth, one by one, a beautiful necklace, earrings, *séigné*, and diadem of brilliants, the value of which was nearly that of a Roman principality!—

Considering the nature of my birth-place, I made proof of greater blindness at that moment than in my cecity of puphood, by honestly expecting to see him carry off the whole of the glittering spoil that lay at his mercy; and was almost as much surprised as the House of Commons on accidentally receiving a straightforward answer from Sir Robert Peel, when I observed him, after separating the long lustrous girandole of brilliants from one of the earrings, and placing it in his pocket, quietly restore the rest of the diamonds to their hiding-place,—close the spring,—replace the various trays,—re-lock the casket,—and bear it back to its place upon the console!

Either he wanted courage for a more extensive spoliation ; or, unprovided with the means of escape from Rome ere the loss of the jewels was discovered, was desirous of procuring in the first instance a sum of money sufficient to convey himself and his plunder out of the Papal territories, ere he risked an alarm ;—for, once arrested, the *forcat échappé* knew that his doom was sealed !—

Apprehensive that, having completed his purpose, he might recall to mind his momentary fright, and suspecting me to be the cause of the mischief, administer summary chastisement, I was cautious to secure myself against his vengeance under a heavy cabinet that stood in a corner of the dressing-room. But I had nothing to fear ! At that moment, his whole soul was in his pocket. All he cared for was to secure an unmolested retreat. He had unlocked the door, and closed it again, after stealing out of the room,—nay, he had probably attained his own chamber on the

third story, and fortified himself therein, ere I ventured to creep in my turn out of my concealment, and draw as deep a gasp as the palpitation of my agitated bosom would allow.

In *his* presence I had scarcely ventured to breathe!—

CHAPTER IX.

My thoughts came back. Where was I?—Cold,
And numb, and giddy. Pulse by pulse,
Life re-assumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb ;—till, grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood re-flow'd, though thick and chill,—
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill.
But all behind was dark and drear.
And all before was doubt and fear :
How many hours of night or day
In those bewildering pangs I lay
I could not tell. I hardly knew
If it were earthly breath I drew.

BYRON.

“ Poor little fellow ! how wretchedly thin
he is looking ! ” was the apostrophe of my
kind lady, when, at the close of a week, she

insisted, in spite of the nurse's sick-chamber authority, on having me placed upon her bed. —“ Are you *quite* sure, Lucy, that Rattle has not been neglected? As my poor aunt Wigmore's favourite, I should be grieved to have him ill-used.”

I had flattered myself that it was as her *own* favourite I was petted. But after a week's absence from my idolized mistress, it was not the moment to be captious.

On the other hand, Lucy protested, and with truth, that she had taken the greatest care of me; but that, as I had neither eaten, drank, nor slept during her ladyship's confinement, she was convinced I had fretted after her,—a statement that procured for me one of the caresses I prized so highly.

Impossible, of course, for poor Lucy Mason to imagine that it was fretting on *her* account, rather than her lady's, which had nearly brought my bones through my skin. Every night, when all eyes but my own and those of

Maurice were closed in the Palazzo Strozzi, had I watched the villain return to his infamous system of spoliation,—till, by degrees, he had substituted for Lady Ulva's costly diamonds, imitations in worthless paste, so accurately copied, that any unprofessional observer might have been at first sight deceived.

From the first, I was determined that, ere his nefarious proceedings were brought to a conclusion, I would some night so suddenly and vehemently alarm the house as to bring all its inmates upon him at once. But, alas! I reckoned without my host.—Lord Ulva, on missing me the fourth night from his room, and finding that I was not admitted into that of my mistress, began to fear that I might be lost, which would be a great vexation to the marchioness. Orders were consequently given that my *niche* should be transferred to his own room, and that I should be fastened there by Maurice every evening, so as to prevent the possibility of escape.

Thus frustrated in my intentions, I was forced to remain ignorant of the final measures taken by the knavish courier; and unable to disclose what *had* come to my knowledge, I almost wished I had been spared participation in a secret so painful.

For it was impossible to say in how many directions, or by what strange ramifications, my feelings were harassed by initiation into the mysteries of Maurice! It happened, for instance, that on the evening of Lady Ulva's seizure, when hastily undressed on recovering from her fainting fit, a bracelet on which she set the highest value, was dropped upon the ground,—trodden upon,—and apparently, irreparably injured.

This bracelet was one of curious workmanship;—having four lockets appended, containing the hair of her two sisters, her mother and brother; and Lucy, aware how affectionately it was valued by her lady, dreaded lest, on inquiring for it after her confinement, and

perceiving it to be broken, Lady Ulva might regard the circumstance as an evil omen, and suffer accordingly.

In her eagerness to get it mended, therefore, previous to her lady's convalescence, she applied to Maurice for the address of a jeweller capable of doing it justice; and one evening, having a commission to execute for the nurse, and being afraid to venture out alone in the streets of Rome, she proceeded with Maurice to the Jews' quarter of the town, which, without explaining to her the meaning of the word Ghetto, he pointed out as the residence of a clever working goldsmith,—one of the best artificers in Rome.

To me, who was as usual resting upon her arm, the house appeared of most suspicious aspect.—Stained with damp,—the discoloured paper hanging from the walls,—the windows broken and patched,—even the sort of warehouse or workshop into which we were introduced by Maurice, wore the most

squalid appearance, notwithstanding the bags of gold, and bowls of coins of all nations' and above all, the precious ingots, piled in a corner of the room.

"Are *you* the confidential servant of the English marchioness?" demanded, in a broken dialect, a strange-looking old man, in a shabby fur cap, and tunic of dark and threadbare cloth, who was stirring something in a crucible as they entered the chamber, rendered almost insupportable by the fumes of the charcoal over which it was simmering;—just such, however, as might be reasonably looked for in a goldsmith's workshop.

And Lucy, a little awed by the strangeness of the place and harsh abruptness of her interrogator, replied with a deep blush in the affirmative. Then, placing before him the broken bracelet, she requested Maurice to explain its peculiar value; and to entreat that not a moment might be lost in the reparation.

“ Tell him,” said she to Maurice, in conclusion, “ that when his work is done, *you* will settle with him about the amount.”

“ Yes,—*I* will settle with you concerning the amount !” said he,—perceiving that Barabbas Leti was listening attentively to all that passed ;—and after a few words for his further re-assurance, in a voice so low as to be inaudible to Lucy, he emerged from that hateful house, with the young girl hanging on his arm ; at a time of day when their entrance and exit were certain to be noticed, not only by the neighbours, but by the officers of the papal police ; who, in plain clothes and unsuspected, are always prowling about the Ghetto, for the benefit of the public safety, and the controlment of misdemeanours among the Jews.

For there was contagion in the spot !—To *me*, it was already familiar. Thither had I dogged the steps of Maurice, on the day succeeding my first discovery of his dishonesty.

It was there I had seen the brilliants of the girandole dislodged from their setting, their weight ascertained carat by carat, their water examined with greedy and covetous admiration; and finally, their value told over into the hands of Maurice in hard gold pieces of the papal mint, to be conveyed to the English lady of rank by whom he stated himself to be employed.

Without exactly understanding or foreseeing *why*, therefore, I shuddered at the idea of an innocent young girl, like Lucy Mason, being seen to issue from an abode of pollution, such as that den of thieves.

And how was I to eat or sleep, I only ask, while such proceedings as these were going on around me?—My life was one of the most poignant excitement,—I lived as it were on the edge of a sword; and my health suffered accordingly.—I was reduced, indeed, to skin and bone; or rather, as it was said of the late Lord W——, that there was nothing of him

left but his whiskers, there was nothing of *me* left but my ears :—

Thank goodness, they *were* left, and for pleasant purposes. I heard nothing but words of pity from Lady Ulva ; while from her lord, I heard what was yet more agreeable—words of tenderness towards his wife and child. Fonder than ever had he grown of his dear Jane, during that temporary separation. The ordeal of absence had revealed to him how much more ardent, how much more sincere was *her* sympathy, than the noisy but shallow friendship of his boon companions. Sick of champagne, lansquenet, and bad company, he blushed for the momentary charm he had found in such vile alternatives ; and when readmitted to the society of the marchioness for a daily visit, the perfect surprise and comparative indifference with which she listened to his recital of the recent accounts brought from Naples of the domestic differences between Sir Scymour and Lady Manners, convinced him at once how

completely he had deceived himself concerning the origin of her illness.

But how would it have been possible to think unkindly of her at such a moment!—To borrow a phrase from the Idler, “her fragile form dressed in snowy muslin,”—reclining in her silken *bergère*,—her delicate features still whiter than her attire, and the fair hand that supported her baby upon her knee, scarcely distinguishable from its spotless drapery,—so sweet was the smile of love with which she gazed upon the child,—the first pledge of a thrice-hallowed affection,—that the incredulous apostle himself would have renewed his faith.

Lord Ulva's, I rejoiced to perceive, was without a drawback. — All I feared was that her own secret misgivings might transpire, and the venom communicated by Lady Surcingle fester into sight. From me, who was in the secret, the searching glance by which she endeavoured to ascertain whether the

man who sat with his hand enclasped in hers, wore the portrait of another concealed in a medallion on his bosom, was not to be disguised ;— and as, at that chilly season, the form of his double-breasted waistcoat did not facilitate the examination, I dreaded lest, when her health should be fully restored, some rash moment, half sport, half earnest, should tempt her to a more peremptory search.—If he proved guilty, he would never forgive her.—If innocent, she would never forgive herself !—

And innocent he unquestionably was ! Already, the unlucky miniature, the cause of so much misunderstanding, was on its way to England in the valise of *Exceptionatus Blank* ;—nay, by this time, had probably found its way to Curzon Street ;—while, as to Princess Garafola, though Lord Surcingle was certainly justified in his remark to his wife that the regular features and pure high-bred complexion of young Ulva had made a conquest of the gazelle-eyed daughter of the South, so

far was he from reciprocating her flame, that the Italian unreserve of her demonstrations filled him with disgust. Never had he felt more deeply the charm of the delicacy and timidity of his young wife, than when contrasting it with the preference of a woman who had no more scruple about talking of her passion, either to others or himself, than if she were describing a picture.

In short, I was beginning to anticipate a renewal of our happy honeymoon on the Arno. For I was allowed my portion in the general joy. Though Lord Ulva seemed never weary of contemplating the angelic beauty of the young mother as she sat with her infant,—*his* infant—resting in her graceful arms,—he was too good-natured to bid poor Rattle begone. I had always my allotted corner in the group; and used to fix my eyes upon her face with an ecstacy equal to his own—like

A nun

Breathless with adoration!

I quite agree with those old masters, nourished on the balmy and refining influences of Italy, that nothing is better calculated for the creation of pious feelings, than the contemplation of mother-love. The more inspired artists of the olden time delighted in promoting the cause of their holy faith by those ecstatic conceptions of the Virgin and child which have formed a type for after ages ; whereas the great painters of Northern Europe, the grosser-minded though gifted materialists of Flanders and Germany, attempted to exercise a similar power over the mind, by their delineation of its more fearful mysteries. Van Dyk and Rubens are the artists of the Cross, as Raphael and Correggio of the Madonna and Child.

I wish some great artist,—(if indeed there be great artists left in the world besides the Vandyks of my favoured species,—Landseer and Vanboeckhoven,)—I wish some great artist could have seen dear Jane in the enjoyment of

that superlative happiness which, as the violet blooms but once in a year, occurs but once in a life !—Talk of first love, indeed !—The joy of first maternity penetrates fathoms deeper into the well-spring of feeling flowing in a woman's breast.

So pleasant, indeed, was the mere spectacle of her happiness,—the new charm that seemed to have invested the common earth when she woke into it of a morning, and the new treasure it seemed to have acquired when she committed it, on laying down her head at night, to the protection of God,—that for a moment I forgot how completely our lives lay at the mercy of a ruffian ; that the hand of a robber was in our purse, and his stiletto at our breast ! Any dawn of day, after those pious prayers of my gentle lady, might find our *dulce domum* converted into the house of death !

One day,—one of these April-like days of February which in southern Italy are so apt to deceive one into the belief that there are two

summers in a year, (just as the beaming influence of a pair of blue eyes occasionally creates a similar delusion in the heart of a superannuated beau,) Lady Ulva was acquainting her lord with a triumphant smile that the morrow was to be the day of baptism for their little girl, as well as for returning public thanks to heaven for the happiness of possessing her; after which, she was to be permitted a drive on the Corso, to inaugurate Lady Jane Howarth into the pleasures of the world renounced in her name, Lucy Mason entered the room bearing a large packet of English letters which she had just received from Maurice ;—a single glance at which, sufficed to explain to me the hurried manner in which Lord Ulva instantly turned aside from the still delicate invalid, and prepared to quit the room—

For I saw that they were bordered and sealed with black !

“ Are there no letters for *me* ?” inquired his wife, with unsuspecting calmness, as he reached the door.

“None!”—was his brief reply, clenching fast in his hand the despatches, of which, even when he reached his own room, he had scarcely courage to break the seal, to ascertain how near and dear might be the friend removed from their affections. For as I have already asserted, my master was the most unworldly man of the world with whom I ever came in contact. A spring of living waters was in the rock that, to all but a prophetic eye, appeared barren.

Lord Ulva,—I beg his pardon, the Duke of Normanford,—(for it was the death of his venerable father which invested even his correspondence with a suit of sables,)—was so completely overpowered by the contents of the verbose letter in which old General Roper communicated to him, at much more than full length, the seizure and painful illness of his noble friend, and the affliction of poor Lady Ellen, who, from the moment of her father’s death had been herself in danger,—that, as I

was unable to soothe his grief, I bitterly repented the curiosity which had tempted me to follow him from my lady's presence.

I could not indeed half account for the paroxysms of self-accusation extorted by the first moments of his anguish.—For distinctly did I hear my poor master revile himself as the author of his father's death!—Though four lengthy pages, indited in the large old-fashioned hand of the General, described with more than sufficient minuteness the progress of his grace's illness, his son kept exclaiming, while beating his breast with his clenched hand like a Franciscan penitent reciting his *mea culpa*,—"I have murdered him,—I have murdered my poor father!"

I do not believe that Effie Deans, when she uttered the same touching ejaculation before the tribunal of Mid-Lothian, could have pronounced the words with more thrilling fervour!—

Yet surely the young duke could not be

upper-housed enough to imagine that a mere disappointment concerning the sex of the grandchild who was to convey his honours to posterity, had sufficed to convey the old duke to the family vault?—

No!—the facts of the case were still a mystery to myself and my lady. His grace had just arithmetic enough remaining in his bewildered brain to calculate that the seizure of his father must have closely followed the receipt of a letter despatched by himself, shortly after his arrival at Rome, announcing, unknown to his wife, a tremendous loss at play!—

Not that Algernon,—the so much-beloved Algernon of Normanford Court,—so cruelly misappreciated his noble parent as to fancy the duke had died of the loss of four thousand pounds! But on his marriage, he had given a promise,—a solemn written engagement,—(in return for the liberality with which his father had facilitated his proposals for the

hand of Lady Jane,) never again to play at a game of chance; and his bitter remorse on the first contemplation of his breach of faith, satisfied him only too painfully what must have been the indignation of the high-minded old nobleman, whose pride it was to look back to the reign of Edward III. through a line of ancestors unstained in honour and loyalty by a single blot on their escutcheon!

„Ein Wort, ein Wort; ein Wahn, ein Mann,“

was one of the first lessons inculcated on his offspring; and well did the young Duke of Normanford understand the misery of the bereaved father who had survived *both* his sons,—the one in life, the other in honour!

Even to his wife, however, from whom he had throughout concealed the fault which he was *compelled* to avow to the duke, he had not courage to confide his terrible self-reproaches; and it appears to *me*,—sorry little dog as I am,—that the wife has much to

regret from whom her husband conceals even his consciousness of error.

It was a fortunate thing for him, poor fellow, that he was forced to put some restraint upon his sorrow ; in order to disclose with caution to the still delicate Jane, the fatal event, and the almost equally afflicting consequences it entailed. Not as regarded her becoming a duchess. I suppose no woman is hypocrite enough to pretend reluctance to assume such precedence and honours as now awaited us. But there was an absolute necessity for her husband's departure, to be present at the opening of the will, and preside over the interment of his lamented father. In ten days,—in less, if possible,—he must be in England, with the utmost speed of steam-boats and railways ; and as his wife was at present unable to undertake such a journey, no alternative but to leave her in Rome,—“ under the charge of those trustworthy ser-

vants, Maurice and Lucy, and the protection of her relations, Lord and Lady Surcingle!"

Was it worth while to be a duchess, with such a penalty attached to the distinction!—Poor Jane, of course, thought *not*; and the few hours devoted by the duke to passport and money preparations, and the selection of the one of his Italian servants as least unfit to attend him, were spent by his wife in tears. *She*, indeed, was anxious that he should not deprive himself of the services of Maurice; and it may be imagined with what anxiety I listened to the result of the affectionate dispute between them, concerning *which* should resign to the other the attendance of the obsequious ruffian who had made himself indispensable in the family! But alas! the argument terminated in our disfavour.—My mistress was not a woman who knew how to have her own way.

And so, we were to be left to his guardian-

ship! We—a delicate, convalescent, and tender babe,—a nervous waiting-woman,—and feeble little dog,—were to be entrusted to the tender mercies of one whom I knew to be a thief, and believed to be an assassin! The sensations with which I heard the clack of the postillion's whip as the duke's travelling-carriage turned the corner of the Via Tordenone, caused, as Jenkins would say,

My fell of hair to start and bristle
As though I heard a night-shriek.

—The grass seemed to be growing over our graves!—

One might almost fancy that the duchess felt as I did; for throughout the ensuing four-and-twenty hours, she took no heed of mortal thing. To hear herself called “*Madame la duchesse*” sixty times a minute, by Maurice, did not make her angry;—to see how fair the baby looked in its black crape bows, did not provoke so much as a melan-

choly smile. She seemed transformed to stone. Bernini's exquisite Daphne at the Villa Borghese, is not half so much a statue!—

Next day, however, she was forced to be angry in her own defence, at the officious attentions lavished by Lady Surcingle on the dear Jane who had progressed into a dear duchess. Invested with the authority of a letter written to Lord Surcingle by the duke, previous to his departure, entreating that the scarcely convalescent invalid might not be left alone,—sit with her she *would*!—And when sitting with her, how was it possible for a woman of such acrid temperament to abstain from the infliction of a thousand pin-pricks, —vague allusions to the Garofala,—the Lucas tara picture,—the medallion,—and above all, the general turpitude, ingratitude, and dissimulation of husband-kind!—

Right glad was I to see my lady angry! I knew it would do her good. Any thing

rather than see her sit bedewing her poor baby with those pearly showers, unavailing, even to make it grow.

And now, dear public, if Maurice was honoured by a place of trust and responsibility, what do you think of *mine*? I, the only creature in the house who had the slightest surmise of his real character, and who consequently felt called upon to watch like a legion of Arguses condensed into one, over the safety of my helpless and unsuspecting mistress!

I had seen her in some danger, poor thing, when condemned by the machinations of a worldly mother and aunt, to give her hand to that beast Lord Hardenbrass. I had seen her in some danger, when, piqued by the discovery of Manners's infidelity, half tempted to mistrust the undeviating affection of the faithful Algy. I had seen her in some danger, when stung by the bitter malignity of Lady Surcingle into one of those fits of jealousy, which, when

vented on a husband, leave as irreparable a defeurement on the affections, as on the face the pitting of the small-pox.

But I had never seen her in such danger as now ;—sleeping undefended in a house stored with valuable plunder ;—to every door of which, a pass key was in the possession of a wretch escaped from the galleys !—

Place yourself in my situation, dear public ! Imagine the person you love best in the world,—a timid inexperienced woman of one-and-twenty,—exposed to such jeopardy,—and conceive what would be your feelings !—I vow to goodness that the newly obtained precedence to which I had looked forward so eagerly, as restoring me to my place in society, affected my feelings precisely as if it had pleased my gracious sovereign to inflict upon me the ignominy of Guelphhood.

CHAPTER X.

Place au conteur, au rêveur, au poète, qui du tombeau de la triste réalité fait sortir de brillantes apparitions. Sont elles vrais, ou au moins veridiques? Voyons critique! Approchez un peu. Prenez vos lunettes, observez de près Etendez la main pour les mieux connaître! Hélas! ces fantômes s'évanouissent sous votre examen, périssent sous votre loupe, disparaissent sous votre scalpél!— Vous ne pouvez réaliser votre enquête sur des visions!—

JULES JANIN.

I REMEMBER one day at Villa Verdasti, our old Tuscan gardener, whose salads were suffering from drought, falling on his knees to beseech the Virgin for rain, and being inter-

rupted by getting drenched to the skin in a heavy thunderstorm.

“ *S'intende acqua, Santa Madonna, non tempesta!* ”—cried poor Peppino, fully convinced that his orisons had brought down the pelting rain.

And with just the same self-sufficiency did I sometimes sit reviling myself for having so often importuned providence for a restoration of my strawberry leaves.—Better have remained the pet of a commonly called marchioness, and been coughed down by the insolence of all the asthmatic Carlini of all the cardinals in Rome, than be exposed to apprehend corrosive sublimate in every meal, and a poniard in every penknife!

What chance that the caitiff who, even with a master under the same roof, had not hesitated to accomplish his midnight crimes, should be touched by compunction in reflecting upon the helplessness of those so confidently committed to his care! Nothing—

nothing to soften the revolted nature of the wretch degraded for his life-long from his birthright among his fellow-creatures! No Stradella to melt him by his notes—no Bossuet to preach him to repentance! In a city constituting the head-quarters of a religion of faith, without hope or charity, the eloquence of the clergy as much resembled that of elderly ladies, as their petticoats and lace; and, as to the music supposed to

Soften rocks and bend the knotted oak,

there was not melody enough that carnival at the Fenice, to mollify a pipe of macaroni!—

Meanwhile the fellow's influence over poor Lucy was becoming more and more alarming. By dint of talking to her about his good wife on the banks of the Garonne, and his dear little daughter Louissette, he had created in the mind of the exiled orphan a feeling of affection, all but filial, towards one whose

courier's *lingua Franca*, — half-French, half-Italian, half-English, — was the nearest approach to her native language that ever met her ear ; and when the caitiff, who now officiated as *maggior d'uomo*, did permit himself to quit the house, it was usually to take her a turn upon the Corso or to the Doria Gardens ; procuring for her the only recreation that comported with her duties.

Impossible for me to guess, though a penetrating dog enough, his ulterior intentions.—Of the diamonds he had fully possessed himself ; nor, till the substitutes passed into the hands of some* experienced jeweller, was there the least chance of detection. Years might elapse without discovery of the fraud already committed ; and as regarded further plunder, our treasury was far from overflowing. Beyond the sums obtained from Torlonia for current uses, there was no money in the house ; and I fondly cherished the hope that we were safe from any imme-

diate perpetration, on the part of one who must be aware of the greater advantages to be derived hereafter from the trusts likely to be confided to him by the unsuspecting duke.

Already, as if in anticipation of the honours to devolve upon his shoulders, he had assumed a suit of solemn black, and like the Jews in their family mournings, abjured a considerable portion of hair and beard ; so that the fellow who, in his courier's costume at Paris, had looked exceedingly like the effigy of the Saracen's Head on Snow Hill, descended from its sign-post, now resembled a well-dressed and urbane executor, such as one meets in Doctor's Commons, coming to prove a will insuring them a handsome legacy ; or the portrait of a fashionable lecturer, in the out-of-sight-line of portraits at the Royal Academy. It was almost questionable whether he was dressing and smiling at a *maitre d'hotel*-ship, or an heiress!—

Meanwhile, the poor duchess, who for

feelings' sake as well as decency's, would fain have preserved a strict seclusion during the absence of her husband, was beset by her female friends with a degree of importunity produced solely by their own want of occupation. Lady Surcingle insisted on coming to work with her; the Ladies Semiton, on coming to sing to her; and sad would have been her plight, but that the weather was propitiously pleased to "save her from her friends," by enabling her to drive out daily, and visit the public trophies and institutions, which, till now, her situation had rendered impossible.

I had long blushed (as became me) like a blue dog, at the idea of quitting Rome in as complete ignorance of its monuments, ancient and modern, as a professor of architecture or a F. A. S. But now, profiting by a precocious spring, we used to go and enjoy the solitary gardens of the Villa Albani,—a precious casket of the choicest gems of art

which tour-makers chiefly notice as containing the only female faun, whereby sculpture has ventured to fling a stone at the lovely sex to which it is so largely indebted ;—or worship with upturned eyes the Ruspigliosian Aurora, and the exquisite Andromeda who might have made a Perseus out of a Lincolnshire squire.

Nay, so much had affliction tended to soften the heart of my mistress, that poor Rattle, though excluded at Florence from a pilgrimage to which he was hereditarily entitled, visited, in the duchess's arms, that "rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear," the Corsini Chapel of Santo Giovanni Laterano ;—where the loveliest statue that ever expanded its swelling contours under a human chisel, almost reconciled me to an art, which, at the Villa Albani, I had taken *en grippe*.

The thing that struck me most, throughout our peregrinations, was neither the grandeur of the ancient ruins—

Fragments of stone, rear'd by creatures of clay,

which, with the exception of the Coliseum, derive their claim to notice from historical association;—nor the triumphs of modern art, which forfeit half their influence on the soul, when visited in cheerless and deserted galleries, accompanied by a *custode* intent only on his fee;—nor the deterioration effected by an inexplicable accrescence of earth upon the work of man's hands, in the spot of all others where human power has assumed its most overweening shape; in ancient Rome by the exercise of physical, in modern by spiritual oppression,—the two master-tyrannies of mankind. But rather the mood of the gentle lady in whose arms I accomplished my excursions. —In the enjoyment of every species of earthly good, the gifts of youth, beauty, rank, and fortune,—an imaginary grief,—a breath,—a shadow,—a vision,—the vapour of an idle woman's vacant spite,—had sufficed, like the craving of the eastern princess after a roc's egg, to convert all her possessions into vanity and vexation of spirit.

Poor creature! *she* saw nothing of those bright creations of genius! In vain for *her* the trimly alleys of those evergreen gardens, —the cypresses pointing their taper spires to heaven, or the marble gleam of porticoes and balustrades enlightening the gloomy though glossy foliage of the myrtle and box. The sole object of her expeditions was to establish a precedent for occasional visits to the Palazzo Lucastara; where she would rivet her tearful eyes by the hour together on the sweet and mournful face of its exquisite Giorgione.

Such, indeed, was her rapt absorption in the picture that, if proceeding from the duke instead of herself, I should have almost apprehended the existence of the same wild infatuation, which estranged the intellects of the girl of Provence, who used to attract public attention in Paris, by her daily visits to the gallery of the Louvre,—mad as Ophelia, for love of the Apollo Belvedere!

The only description given of this delightful head by the *ciceroni* of Rome, is “Head of a noble lady, by Giorgione.” — But without affecting the cant of connoisseurship, I cannot help venturing to suggest, that there is nothing of Giorgione in the handling; and that the well-known head by Guido, in the Barberini Collection, so long supposed to be that of Beatrice Cenci, being fully established as a mere study by that great painter,—a study frequently repeated from some favourite model,—(probably an artist, for the copy in the Brera gallery at Milan has a palette in its hand)—this *soi-disant* head by his great Venetian prototype, in which the touch of Guido Reni is as distinctly perceptible as the touch of Lawrence in the brown Brutus of George IV., *may* be the original head of that hapless murderess, the most interesting on record since the days of Judith;—which, even after it had rolled upon the scaffold, no one could look on without tears.

This hypothesis may be regarded by Segur, Baron Taylor, or any other of the comptrollers of the picture market, as the vagary of a puppy. But there is at least more justification for it than in the supposition of my poor lady, that its pensive sweetness resembled the vivacious countenance of Princess Garofala ; whose almost colourless eyes were bright as sparkling champagne. *She* saw in the picture in which others beheld only some *dama nobile* of the fifteenth century,—some noble Cornaro or Barbarigo, whose dust has long since merged in the dust of ages,—only a gold medallion,—a medallion cherished with fatal predilection beside the treacherous heart of her husband !—

Never did she quit the gallery without giving a sigh to the associations it conjured up ; which leads me to observe that, though all ineffable tourists are in the habit of “ giving a sigh ” every page or two to some monument they are visiting, for the sake of some other

monument it brings to mind, (the sighs of the Idler alone, if collected, would turn a mill!) *I* never observed an English visitor give *anything* while undergoing the penance of sight-seeing, except a few pauls, and, now and then, a yawn.

One day, after we had been wasting our usual sighs and pauls at the Lucastara, we found, on our return, Lady Surcingle and Lady Maria Semiton established in the salon,—pretending on our arrival to be looking out from the *balcone* overlooking the Tiber, with the sort of exaggerated pantomime that says—“ You see I am looking out of the window. I have not been examining your goods and chattels, or reading your letters.”

“ I was resolved, my dear duchess, to wait for you, if you did not return till midnight !” said Lady Surcingle,—rushing to meet us.—“ Tired of receiving excuses from you, I am come in person to entreat you will dine with us to-day. Not a word about declining all

invitations during the duke's absence!—You well know he wrote a second time to Surcingle, from Marseilles, to beg we would not allow you to mope yourself.”

“ But I assure you I am not moped. On the contrary, *you* can bear witness that I have been out the whole morning—”

“ Which is no reason for your secluding yourself the whole evening!—Dining with *us*, you know, my dear, is only dining *en famille*. And to-day we have no one with us but the Hereditary Prince and his governor, who have just returned from Naples for the *Semaine Sainte*, and are dying to see you.”

“ That you have company of any kind, is additional reason for declining your kind invitation,” said the duchess. “ But under any circumstances, my dear Lady Surcingle, I must have excused myself; for my baby was vaccinated yesterday, and——”

“ Are you *really* going to begin, at *your* age, that terrible nursery slavery which con-

verts English society into a lying-in hospital!" cried Lady Maria, with a grimace of fastidious compassion,—(for the copyright of which, Debureau, the Parisian Pierrot, would have offered a handsome sum.) "*Do* leave the baby to its nurse,—and come among us again, like a reasonable being!"—

But her grace persisted in pleading her baby and broad hems, and would not be entreated.

I saw, though *she* could not, a glance of peculiar significance exchanged at that moment between Lady Surcingle and her friend.

"I want you above everything to meet the Hereditary Prince," said the former;—"in the first place, because his cobalt eyes brightened like the blue sky at sunrise, when he heard that such a happiness was possible; in the next, because he has brought a budget of news about our friends at Naples."

"I have no friends at Naples," replied the duchess, in a dispirited tone,—as if not over sure of having friends anywhere.

“ No friends at Naples?—*You*, my dear Jane, that used to flirt so desperately in former days with Sir Seymour Manners !”—

“ Those are such *very* former days,” replied the duchess, wholly unconcerned, “ that I had almost forgotten the claim !—But I have no right to do so ; for Sir Seymour is a dear friend of my husband.”

“ I can assure you, then, that he is sadly in want just now of dear friends !” rejoined Lady Surcingle. “ For poor fellow !—he is actually in prison.”—

“ I am truly sorry to hear it !” said the duchess, with more interest. “ What has he been doing ?—The old story, I suppose, wherever an Englishman is concerned,—taking part in the political troubles of the country !”

“ Much worse than that, my dear. Since Byron set the example, Carbonaroism has been *très bien porté*. But Sir Seymour is in prison for debt !”

“ He has been playing, then,—as he did so madly at Wisbaden !”—

“ Playing the *fool*, as *he* did ‘at Wisbaden,’” retorted Lady Maria, interrupting the tune she was humming, to interrupt a dialogue almost as false.

“ On this occasion, it is for his wife’s extravagance he has to suffer. Some old debts of Lady Manners have been fastened upon his shoulders; and, as it is supposed, with *her* connivance, in order that she may throw off for a time his peevish *surveillance*.”

“ How unfortunate, — how disgraceful, — how unlike what was once expected of him and for him!”—cried the duchess, with perfect frankness. “ If Algernon were here, I am certain he would hasten to his assistance. Surely he must have English friends to come forward on such an occasion ?”

“ His present English friends are of a nature to have such occasions of their own,” replied her visitor. “ Lord Surcingle was saying

something just now, about doing his best to assist him. He is going to write, I believe, and offer him a couple of hundred pounds. But I fancy the debt amounts to three or four."

"Pray mention then to Lord Surcingle, that I will desire Torlonia to transfer two hundred pounds to his account, if he will offer the sum in the name of the duke."

Again was a significant smile exchanged between the wily countess and her friend. But the conversation was just then forced into a more general channel, by the arrival of the frizzly fribble, Count Chicoré; who profited by seeing Lady Surcingle's carriage under the portal in the Via Tordenoni, to obtain admittance to our house which, seven days in the week, was inaccessible to his endeavours.

For my part, I thought no further of Sir Seymour's distresses,—my patience in his favour having long been exhausted. No more, I am convinced, did her grace; whose

attention, for a week to come, was so thoroughly engrossed by her nursery, that even the Lucastara Gallery was forgotten.

Before her maternal fidgets and the child's fever were at an end, came the letters, so anxiously looked for, from England. The duke had arrived in perfect safety, and within the time prescribed. But he wrote in wretched spirits. Though in addressing his wife he made no allusion to the subject, he had ascertained beyond a doubt that his father's seizure was brought on by the discovery of his indiscretion; and the state of poor Lady Ellen was still highly alarming.

"I am grieved, dearest Jane," wrote he, "that, knowing you to be alone and forlorn, I am unable to address you in a more cheerful strain. But independent of dear Nelly's illness, the objects around me are indeed of a dispiriting nature. To-morrow being appointed for the funeral, I have descended this morning into the family vault, to select the spot

where I am to lay my poor father's gray head to rest. I can scarcely describe to you, dearest, the sensation it produced in my mind, after having found in searching for papers in his secretaire last night, my mother's hair, and ring, and picture, treasured as if she had been but a few hours in the grave, to stand to-day beside her coffin,—faded, mildewed,—a thing of other years,—though it seems but yesterday that I laid down my childish face upon that velvet lid,—weeping upon it as if my whole world,—my whole soul—were contained within!

“To-morrow will re-unite in the dust the pair so long parted, and so faithfully attached. Would that you were with me, Jane, to support my courage during one of the severest trials of the human heart;—and some day or other, my dear little wife, may our children so re-unite ourselves; and with the consolatory feeling I cherish at this moment, that there was nothing in the lives or conduct of

their parents to render them anxious concerning their memory in this world, or hopes in the next !”

The ensuing letter, which contained an account of the funeral ceremony, was written in a still more desponding strain. And the duchess, though she wept over it for hours, and lay awake over it for as many more after placing it under her pillow, was as pleased and proud of it, as Laura could have been of the most melting sonnet of Petrarch. For she felt convinced that, when writing it, there was no gold medallion on her husband’s bosom,—no Princess Garafola in his heart !

It was not till after a week or so that the duke’s letters reverted to the state of his affairs, or the position he had attained. It was in speaking of his intention to double the fortune of his sister.

“ It is the least I can do,” said he, “ in requital of all the sacrifices made for me by my father, and of dear Ellen’s filial devotion,

which in some measure served to atone for my faults, and console the last hours of the dead."

"I am still anxious on my sister's account," wrote he, shortly afterwards; "and as there are worlds of business to be accomplished both at Normanford and in town, in the way of inventory-making and so forth, which can be better done by my man of business during our absence, I shall at once hasten back to you, with Nelly; and we can all return together to England, in the autumn. I shall *then* have better courage to take possession of our new home, than now, while every object remaining as it used to be, reminds me only too painfully of those who are gone, never to return!"

My poor mistress, whose tears had nearly rivalled the torrent of Tivoli while perusing her husband's affecting account of the Duke of Normanford's obsequies, which she seemed to see present before her as the Romans did the

death of Cæsar when excited by the eloquence of Mark Antony and the sight of his ensanguined robe,—was scarcely less overpowered by the joyful news of his return. Though three weeks, or more, must elapse ere they could meet, she flew instantly to the nursery, to ascertain whether their mutual treasure were in good looks; and whether there were any chance of her little ladyship outgrowing her first robes, before his arrival!

Great was her delight, moreover, when the Duke wrote to propose that, as the summer heats would have set in by the time he could rejoin her, she should remove to a marine villa in the neighbourhood of Cività Vecchia, which had been offered them previous to his departure from Rome.—Maurice would take all trouble off her hands; and she would thus escape all risk from mal'aria, and they might concoct at leisure the project of a coasting tour of Sicily.—For the duke, who, amongst the obligato fooleries of a career like that of Lord

Algernon Howarth, had served his apprenticeship at Cowes, as a dry-land cabin boy, the chief duties of which consisted in leaning over a dusty rail in the dogdays, in a pilot coat and Sou'wester,—intended that his yacht should meet him at Marseilles, that they might spend the autumn cruizing in the Levant.

Next to the duchess, the most overjoyed at mention of the words “return to England,” was poor Lucy Mason! Though her attachment to her kind considerate lady was such as to reconcile her to all times and places, in her service, Lucy was becoming a little homesick. The temporary bitterness of heart engendered by the illusage and sufferings undergone by her mother, was now dissipated amid the greater charities of an excellent nature; and she longed to hear once more the sound of her land's language,—of her village bells,—and of the voice of the good pastor for whose lessons they bespoke attention.

Though an evil destiny had circumvented

her mother's yearning desire to behold that spot once more before she died, and be laid under its old yew trees at last, Lucy, who had now achieved fortune, looked forward with a patient smile to the holiday promised her by the Duchess on her arrival at Normanford Court; that she might return to the place of her birth, and prove to the kindred whose name she bore, and above all to the cousin Ralph who, but for the grudgingness of a curmudgeon father, would have made it her own for ever rather than that she should go to service,—that Providence had not altogether deserted her father's house!

Very often, beside her window overlooking the Tiber, did the mild, grave, sorrow-tutored English girl sit lost in visions of her return to Ashfield,—of its rich harvest fields undulating like a golden ocean in the breeze,—of the mellow even-song of the thrush from its thickets,—of the smoke curling from many a happy homestead among the sturdy old elms,—of

England,—England,—greenEngland,—a word of which one never learns the value, till parched and stifled, and pestered with the fleas, garlic, and glare of a southern land.—Curled cozily upon her knee, I lay listening to her gentle breathings; till her happy reminiscences of an home burst forth in snatches of some old English ballad, that brought tears into both our eyes.—

One evening I particularly remember,—for it was immediately after Easter, and the habitual quietude of our abode seemed more than ever remarkable after the excitement and recent concourse of strangers in the city occasioned by the august ceremonies of holy week,—Lucy had opened wide the window, to qualify by the fresh air the overpowering perfume of a large bunch of jonquils, left by Maurice upon her work-table; so that the balmy breath of spring and the cries and songs of the boatmen rose together from the river below, mingling with the *susurro* of her own exulting thoughts.

For the Duchess had bidden her commence her preparations for departure on the morrow. A letter received that morning from Normansford Court instructed Torlonia to advance the sums necessary for quitting Rome and taking up our abode at the Marino; and the duke was to arrive in his new yacht, the *Fire Fly*, in the course of ten days or a fortnight, bringing with him, in addition to his English crew, Lady Ellen Howarth and her two servants,—one of whom had been the faithful personal attendant of the late duke.

The notion of such an influx of English companions, seemed to cheer up the poor girl's spirits; for she began to sport with me as she had never done before; asking me, again and again, amid her gamesome antics, whether I was not glad to leave Rome, with all its empty mummeries of religion; and whether I should not rejoice to be in the country again, sporting on the green grass, and hearing only old England's honest wholesome tongue?—

I replied of course as became me, by heartily wagging my tail; and like a well-bred dog, bowed, and vowed to Heaven that if I could once again behold the cliffs of Dover, with their fat beeves and South Down mutton, the *Doganieri* might confiscate me if ever I attempted to re-enter the Papal States. Like rivers that fertilize by overflowing, I was in hopes, by the excess of my demonstrations, to ensure her regard.

While we were still mutually inciting each other's glee, Maurice re-entered the room; and I saw by an unquiet gleam in his eye, that this sudden removal was somehow or other at variance with his projects.

"Her grace thinks we shall be able to get away by Monday next," said the joyous girl. "And by the way, Monsieur Maurice, she desired me to bid you order the carriage a quarter of an hour before the usual time to-morrow; as she wishes you to take her jewel-box to Milanollo's."

“ To Milanollo’s?—For what?”—

“ She did not tell me.— To make some alterations, I suppose. For I know she was there to day: and on her return bad me not let her forget to send the box to-morrow, or there would not be time before we left Rome for what she wanted done.”

Something like an oath escaped the lips of Maurice;—a thing so unusual with him, that Lucy, attributing his excitement to the heat of the weather and strong scent of the flowers, kept caressing me the more, that she might not seem to have noticed it.

But when, a few minutes afterwards, she addressed some trifling inquiry to him respecting the accommodations at the Marino, which he alone of all the family had seen, and its distance from the sea, he was too absorbed in thought to vouchsafe the smallest answer. Instead of replying, he rose from the seat near the work-table into which he had thrown himself, and abruptly quitted the room.

Soon afterwards, Lucy, who was too happy to be a moment quiet, carried me down to my mistress. And even the duchess appeared to be in unusual spirits;—for, instead of reading on the sofa, as she usually spent her lonely evenings, she was at the piano,—singing and playing,—now a bar or two of a bravura,—now, the coda of a waltz;—now, one of Palestrina's motets which she had heard the preceding week at St. Peter's, in such glorious perfection, that it was scarcely possible not to break forth respondent into Handel's exulting strain—

Hallelujah!

Methinks I hear the full celestial choir!—

I am afraid I have little or no music in my soul! For while those swelling chords were yet pealing in my ear, off I went to sleep; and slept, good sooth, like a dog, all the time she was singing, and apparently long afterwards. The first thing of which I was conscious, was

the noise made by Maurice in entering the saloon, some time after her grace's departure for bed, to see that the footman had extinguished the lights.

While he was going his usual rounds of investigation, peeping and prying into every thing, and trying whether my mistress had accidentally left open her desk or *sécretaire*, I lay *perdu* in a dark corner of the divan, pretending to be still asleep. Even when Lucy made her appearance from the duchess's room, in search of me, I remained as still as death, while she stood inquiring of Maurice what ailed him, that he looked so flushed; and attributed the head-ache, of which he complained, to the jonquils.

“ I feel quite ill, myself, to-night,” said she ;
“ and am persuaded it is the flowers ; or perhaps there is thunder in the air.”

Maurice assented to the possibility of either case ; adding that, if she liked, he would give her a few drops of a specific for the head-ache,

which he always carried about with him,—his wife being subject to indisposition.

“It is a simple remedy,” said he, “fit, indeed, for a child;—and never fails of effect.”

Lucy Mason thankfully assented; then, observing aloud that “Rattle had probably found his way to the nursery,” prepared to seek me there; begging Maurice to bring the drops to her room.

But my suspicions were so far aroused that I followed him unobserved from the saloon;—and having watched him discharge the whole contents of a small phial into a glass of strong elder-flower water, was close at his heels when he entered Lucy’s chamber; fully resolved that the potion prepared by his villanous hand should never reach her lips.

But even the most determined dog cannot insure having its own way; and Maurice held me so stringently in his arms, and sat laughing and talking with so much appa-

rent *bonhomme* all the time Lucy was getting down her unpalatable draught,—telling her that “if she swallowed it like a good girl, without too many wry faces, he would present her afterwards with a *bonbon*, as he always did his little *Louissette*,”—that I began to feel ashamed of my mistrust.—But for my knowledge of his branded shoulder, I should have been apt to pronounce him the best of *pères de famille*, and kindest of men.

“Better not have Rattle sleep in your room, Ma’m selle Lucie, if you wish not to be disturbed after your sedative!” said he. “Besides, her grace cannot bear to be without him; though, from her door opening into the nursery, she *ought* never to feel lonely!”

“I am so tired,—so very tired,”—replied Lucy, almost staggering from fatigue,—“that I really cannot take him down to-night. Since the little fellow *has* chosen to play truant, he must stay here till to-morrow.”

And, sinking into a chair, she looked indeed

as if the task of conveying me to my mistress would be too much for her strength.

“ Besides,” added she — half inarticulate from sleepiness,—“ her grace is already in bed; and as little disposed to be disturbed as I am.”

“ Still, you had better not have the dog here,” said Maurice, taking up his candle to depart.—“ I will put him within the nursery door, as I proceed down the back stairs to my own room; and from thence, the doors being, as I said just now, left open, he will soon find his way to his basket.”

Fain would I have resisted, had it been in my power; for there was something unnatural to me in the voice and countenance of Lucy. She laughed so wildly and strangely, at nothing, and then closed her eyes so idiotically while Maurice was wishing her good night, that I made a vain attempt to leap out of his arms, and take up my quarters with her for the night.

I knew not to what degree might be deleterious the odour of the jonquils. But of this I was certain: that the poor girl was more indisposed than she was aware of. The first thing that met my ear from Lucy's room when Maurice closed her door, and proceeded with cautious steps down the *scala uffiziale*, was a sort of rattling hysterical laugh.

In another moment, and the nursery door being gently opened by the privileged *maggior d'uomo*, I was silently deposited within its sacred precincts; and, having too much regard for the duchess and the duchess's babe to disturb their slumber by an untimely bark, judged it better, like the gracious Duncan, to put on my nightcap and go quietly to bed.

I really don't know what to say about somnambulism, even in soliloquy. The man,—or dog,—who deceives others, may be a knave; but the man,—or dog,—who deceives himself, is a fool;—and for my credit sake, I wish to deal with that excellent creature,

Rattle, with the most conscientious sincerity.—

I may consequently be believed when I asseverate, (and I am prepared to write a letter of attestation to the *Athenæum*, or *Gardener's Gazette*, or *Bell's Life in London*, or any other readable periodical, detailing the facts in more dictionary English and at fuller length,) that, on the night in question, I dreamed that, like the French painter, Robert, I was accidentally shut into the catacombs of Rome. Whichever way I turned, the same horrible boundlessness of charnel, — the same darkness visible, — or rather the same glimmering light, rendering apparent millions of human skulls, the wreck of centuries,—the same faint odour of decaying mortality,—the same foul atmosphere emanating from the decomposition of nature's refuse, —weighed upon my soul.

And as I fled along those avenues of osuary, I was pursued by the voice of Lucy,

now, laughing in hysterical agony,—now, indulging in the snatches of joyous song which had burst that morning out of the depths of her innocent heart. And ever and anon between, resounded the dry hard voice of the learned Baron, governor to his Serene Highness the Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Kraurland, (I love, as Dr. Primrose says, to give the whole name,) pursuing his tedious narrative of an execution at the *Bagne*!

I will not swear that the treacherous Maurice may not have insinuated unclean meat upon my trencher; for I know that our dinners were often such as the Ghetto would have turned aside from, with as much disgust as *I* should from its most luscious banquet. But swear I *will* that I woke with the ejaculation of Clarence upon my lips,

O, I have pass'd a miserable night !

Yet into how pleasant a world did I awake !
—a world to beget agreeable sensations even

in a man who has lost his chancery-suit, or a shareholder in asphalt ! Nurseries are early astir ; and the first thing I heard was the crowing carol of the baby nestling in its mother's bosom ; whose snatches of song were probably those I had seemed to hear in my dream, and whose smiles of triumph when she fancied that the child noticed me as I jumped on the bed to wish her my usual good morrow, perfected the beauty of that lovely and still almost girlish face, amid its folds of cambric and Valenciennes. Babe,—mother,—Rattle,—impossible for this work-a-day world to produce three happier creatures !—The sun that was shining in upon us through the silken curtains, seemed to take pleasure in witnessing our joy !—

But in the midst of all,—a scream, — a scream whose horror-stricken shrillness is destined to haunt my ear for evermore,—sounded from a distance ; and was repeated, coming nearer and nearer, until Fiorina, the Roman

girl who officiated in the household as chamber-maid, but who was as little in the habit of appearing in the duchess's presence as in that of the Pope, burst into the room, flung herself weeping and shrieking on her knees by the bed-side,—her black hair dishevelled by the removal of the bodkin that usually supported its tresses, and her white apron every now and then thrown frantically over her face, as though to exclude some hideous spectacle!—She reminded me so strongly of the distracted female figures introduced by artists into pictures of the sack of Rome under the Connétable de Bourbon, when

The black bands came over

The Alps and the Po,

that I actually forgot to bark at her!

The poor girl was as one possessed; and, after listening a few moments to her incoherent ejaculations, I fancied the duchess had taken the infection; for she also began to scream, and call loudly for assistance.

“Ring for Maurice,—summon all the servants!” cried she, the moment the terrified nurse made her appearance. — “Let Dr. Hampson be fetched!—Fiorina has found my poor dear Lucy dead in her bed!”—

The nurse, who was a stout Milanese, capable of throttling a gend’arme, instantly rushed up stairs to render assistance; and when Maurice, obeying the summons of the bell and the injunctions of the duchess, more deliberately followed, *his* instructions on entering the fatal chamber were of a still more peremptory nature.

“Let Giovanni go instantly for the police!” cried he, addressing Fiorina; “and bid the porter suffer no other human being, on whatever pretence, to quit the house.—There has been murder here!”

Well might he say so;—for the bed of that unfortunate girl seemed standing in a pool of blood!—

LONDON :

PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.



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AUG 3 - 1970

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